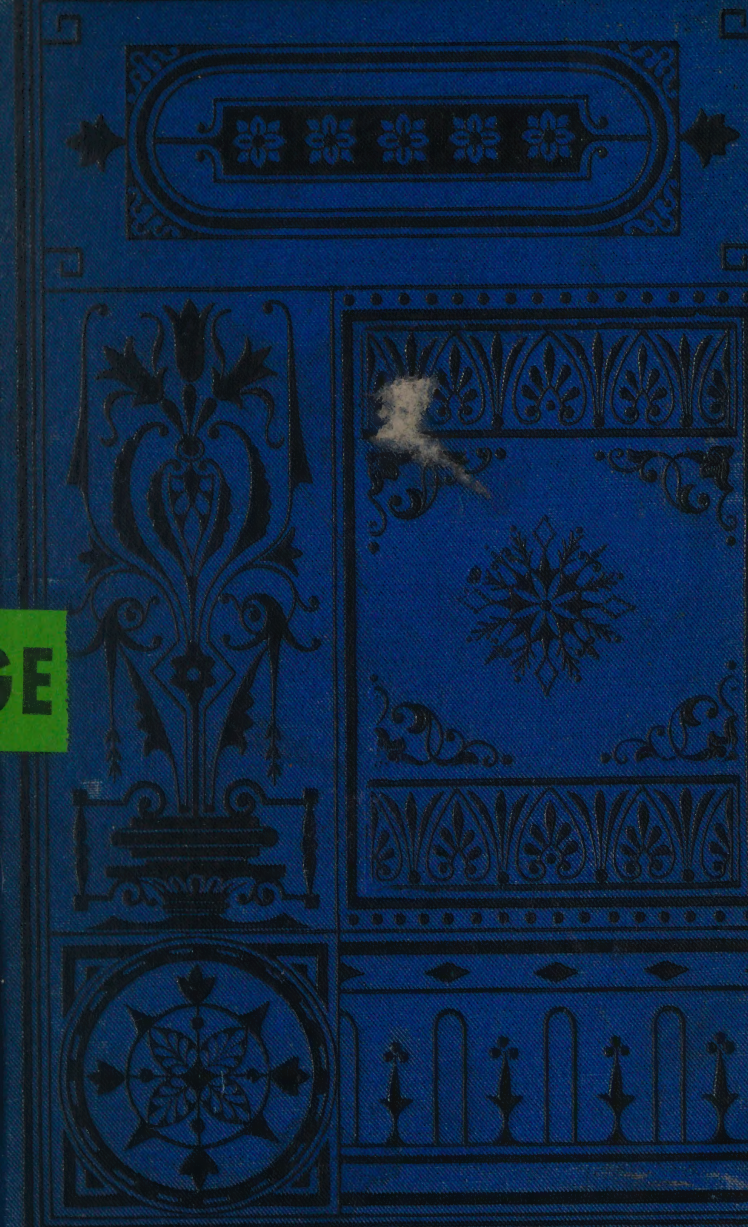


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HEROES OF THE HOUSEHOLD.



HEROES OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.



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HEROES OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

I.

SAINT BARBARA.

“**W**HAT a queer little body!” exclaimed one lady to another as a girl passed through the room where they were sitting. She was leading a child by the hand, and carrying another in her arms.

“Our Barby,” was answered.

“Where in the wide world did you discover this funny specimen of humanity?” laughed the first speaker. “She looks as if modeled from one of Punch’s caricatures.”

“Oh, we’ve had Barby, as the children call her, for a long time; and I don’t know what we should do without her.”

Now, Barbara was not very comely to look upon. Truly, as the lady had said, she was a queer little body. Almost dwarfish in stature, her head was so large as to look out of all proportion. Not a feature in her face seemed rightly adjusted. One eye was lower than the other, and set at a different angle from its neighbor; and both were singularly small for the size of her face, which was broad and round. Her nose was neither Roman nor Grecian, and yet it made a prominent feature, and had a very decided expression. The mouth was large, but not coarse or sensual; the chin delicate and receding. Barbara's manner of walking could hardly be called graceful. Her short, round, thick person—she was all waist or none, as you might choose to have it—swayed from side to side in a duck-like manner. There is a word which exactly expresses the gait, but we will not use it. We are not holding "little Barby" up to ridicule.

"I know very well what I would do *with* her," said the visitor.

"What?"

"Send her to a menagerie, or anywhere else."

"Why so?" The lady looked a little serious.

"Oh, because I wouldn't have such a hideous monster about me. I would no more trust my children with her than with an orang-outang. One glance at her face and person is enough. No beautiful soul can be enshrined in so deformed a body. Depend upon it, nature never hangs out a sign like that, except in warning."

"We know Barbara," was the confident, quietly-spoken answer.

"You may think you know her. And so we thought we knew our kitten, until one day its sharp claws were in baby's face."

"What an elegant silk!" said the lady to her visitor, changing a subject that was growing unpleasant. "Where did you get it?"

"At Levy's."

"Has he more of the same style?"

"Yes. There were two or three charming patterns when I selected this."

And then the conversation went ranging away

upon themes out of connection with our present subject—the humble, homely Barbara. It is just ten years since she entered Mrs. Grayson's family. She was then only twelve years old. It was not much that Barbara could remember of her parents. They were poor working people, who did not manage to get along well, and Barbara's earliest memories had not, therefore, many sunny gleams to brighten them. She was not more than six when her mother died, leaving her, an unlovely child, to the unwilling charity of strangers. The six years that followed were marked by many sufferings. The poor child rarely had a kind word from any one. Mrs. Grayson first saw her in her kitchen, one cold winter morning, with a milk-pail in her hand.

“Bless me!” she exclaimed to the cook, after the child went out. “What a singular-looking girl! Who is she?”

“Some oddity that our milk-woman has picked up,” replied the cook.

“How long has she been coming here?”

"About two weeks; and I'm really getting to like the funny thing."

Once seen, Barbara's image was not likely to fade from the mind. Mrs. Grayson thought of her several times during the day, and on the next morning dropped down early into the kitchen. Barbara came in from the frosty air just as Mrs. Grayson entered, her face almost purple with cold. She set down her milk-pails and stood up between them, almost as cylinder-like in form as they, though by no means proportionally taller. There was an almost ludicrous expression of suffering on her singular face.

"Why, you're nearly frozen, child," said Mrs. Grayson.

"Indeed, and it's bitter cold, ma'am," replied the little girl, putting to her mouth ten red fingertips, which protruded from the worn woolen gloves that covered her hands, and blowing with an energy that made her breath almost whistle against them.

"What is your name?" asked the lady.

"My name's Barby, ma'am."

"Barbara."

"Yes, ma'am; but they call me Barby."

"Have you a mother?"

"No, ma'am."

"Nor father?"

"No, ma'am."

Barbara's answers were made in a prompt, even, rather musical tone of voice, in which was no sign of weakness.

"How long have you been serving milk?" asked Mrs. Grayson.

"Two or three weeks, ma'am," replied Barbara. "Susan got sick and went away, and Mrs. Miller said I must try my hand at serving customers."

And the child stooped as she spoke, and taking the cover from one of her pails, began filling the cook's pitcher with milk. This done, she replaced the cover, and without stopping to be the recipient of any further kind inquiries, braced herself up to the work of carrying the two heavy vessels, and went trudging away on her round of duty.

"It's a shame," said the cook, "to put such work on a mere child. But some people have no mercy."

Mrs. Grayson sighed, and went in a thoughtful mood from her kitchen.

One morning, toward the end of January, when the snow lay thick upon the ground, the cook tapped at Mrs. Grayson's door, and said,

"I wish, ma'am, that you'd just come down and look at Barby."

"What's the matter with her?" asked the lady.

"Well, I think, ma'am, that you ought to see her," replied the cook.

"Very well. I'll be down in a moment," said Mrs. Grayson, who hurried on her morning wrapper and descended to the kitchen.

There stood little Barbara between her milk-pails, just stooping to the task of lifting the heavy burdens. The cook had been trying to keep her until Mrs. Grayson came down, but Barbara had no time to lose, for customers were waiting; and her sense of duty, or fear of punishment—which may

not be known—was too strong to let her wait, even though the hope of seeing the lady who had once spoken to her kindly was trembling in her heart.

Mrs. Grayson saw at a glance that hardship or sickness had been making sad work with the child. The round, healthy face had changed to one of suffering and emaciation; and there was a shrunken look about her figure that contrasted strongly with its former plumpness. As she raised her eyes, Mrs. Grayson saw in them a look that moved her sympathy.

“I wish, ma’am,” said cook, “that you’d just look at Barby’s feet.”

“I can’t stay a minute longer.” And Barbara stood up straight, lifting by the act her pails a few inches from the floor. “I’m late now, and people want their milk.”

“Let them want it,” said cook, dogmatically, stepping forward as she spoke, and taking out of Barbara’s little hands the two heavy pails, which she placed on a table beyond her reach.

“Oh, but Mrs. Miller will be angry!” urged

the child in distress. "And then, you know, people want their milk. They can't have breakfast until I get round."

"Now, ma'am," said the cook, "just look at them feet! Did you ever see the like in all your born days?"

She had grasped Barbara by the arms and placed her on a chair, and now lifted one of her feet, which was covered with the remnant of a woolen stocking and an old slipshod leather shoe. Through rents and worn places in the wet stocking shone the fiery skin, which was cracked and ulcerated.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed Mrs. Grayson, sickening at the sight. "Take off the stocking, Jane," she added.

The stocking was removed, exhibiting the extent to which the foot was diseased. There were great cracks in the heel, the edges of which were of a dark purple, as if mortification were threatened. The whole foot was of a deep-red color, and the tense skin shone as if polished.

"Only chilblains, Mrs. Miller says," remarked

Barbara. She did not speak in a tone of complaint.

"Let me see the other foot," said Mrs. Grayson. Jane removed the old shoe and stocking, and exhibited a foot in even a worse condition.

"How do they feel?" asked the lady.

"Oh, ma'am, they itch, and burn, and hurt now, dreadfully," replied the child.

"Draw me a bucket of cold water, Jane."

"Yes, ma'am." And Jane turned away quickly.

"Oh dear!" said the child, in distress. "Give me my shoes and stockings. All the people are waiting for breakfast. I'll never get round."

"Put just enough warm water in to take off the chill."

Mrs. Grayson spoke to Jane, not heeding Barbara.

"Will that do?"

"No. It is too warm. I want it just about like spring water."

"Do let me go!" urged Barbara. "All the people will be angry."

"There; put your feet in," said Mrs. Grayson, as Jane set the bucket on the floor in front of the child.

"Mrs. Miller 'll beat me." And tears ran over Barbara's face.

"No, Barby," said Mrs. Grayson, kindly, "Mrs. Miller shall not beat you. I will see to that."

"But you don't know her, ma'am, as I do."

"I'll tell you what I do know, Barby," said Mrs. Grayson, as she knelt on the floor by the singular-looking child who drew so strongly upon her sympathies, and held her feet in the water. "I know that Mrs. Miller will never hurt a hair of your head."

"But what will people do for their milk this morning?" Barbara was as much troubled on this head as on that which involved consequences to herself.

"Do without it!" was the firm reply. "You are not going from this house to-day."

"Oh dear, ma'am! that won't do; I must go round with my milk."

It was in vain that Barbara plead for freedom to go forward in the way of duty. She was under the control of those who were stronger than she, and quite resolute. After keeping the child's feet in cold water for nearly ten minutes, or until they had ceased to ache and burn, Mrs. Grayson dried them with a soft napkin until all moisture was removed.

"Now stand up, Barby."

But, in attempting to bear her weight, Barbara cried out with sudden pain, while the blood started from many gaping sores on her feet.

"You see, Barby," said Mrs. Grayson, kindly, "that there is to be no more serving of milk to-day. Jane," she added, "can't you take her up to the little room next to yours? There is a bed in it, you know."

The cook's heart was in all this. So she lifted Barbara in her strong arms and carried her up stairs, followed by Mrs. Grayson.

"I think she has fever," said Jane, as she placed her on the bed. "Just feel how hot her hand is!"

"Yes; I noticed that," replied Mrs. Grayson. "The child has considerable fever. In fact, she's sick enough to be in bed, instead of on the street carrying milk-pails; and in bed we must place her. So, do you take off her clothes while I go for one of Helen's wrappers."

"Indeed, ma'am," objected Barbara to this, "I can't lie here; Mrs. Miller will be so angry; and what will the people do for their milk?" This was the question that troubled the poor child most of all.

"Do without it, and who cares!" answered Jane, who was getting provoked at Barbara's great concern for her customers.

"I care," said the child, speaking in a firm voice. "They expect me, and I've never disappointed them. Everybody's breakfast will be waiting."

"Not everybody's," replied Mrs. Grayson, smiling. "But don't let that trouble you. What can't be cured must be endured."

"I wish Mrs. Miller knew about it," said Barbara, still pursuing the theme.

"Where does she live?"

Barbara gave the direction. It was not far away.

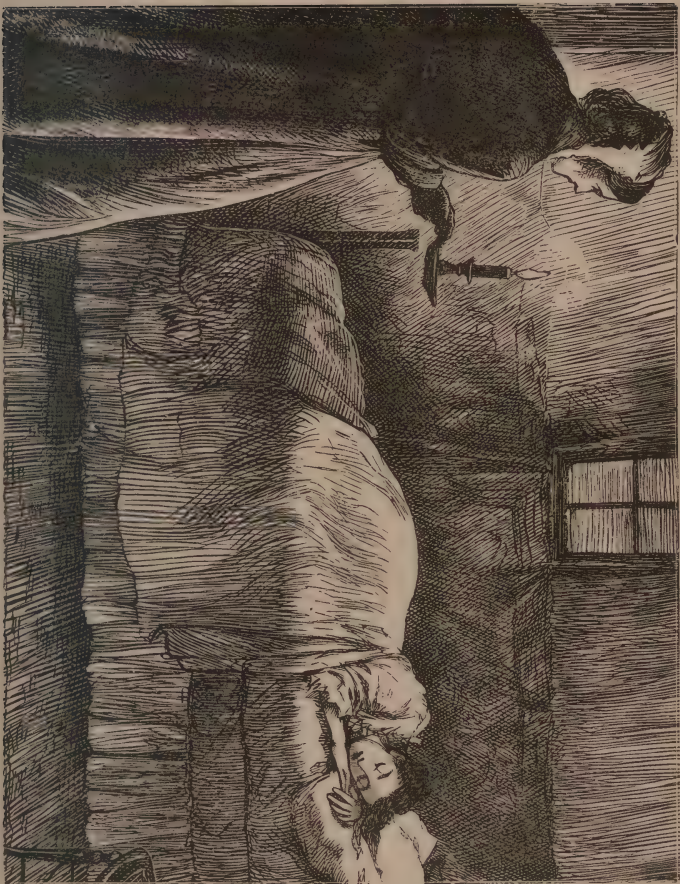
"I'll send her word to come and get her milk-pails," said Mrs. Grayson.

This satisfied the child, who, now that the strain was off of her, was showing more and more exhaustion. Jane removed her soiled and scanty garments, and laid her under the bed-clothes.

"I do believe I *am* sick," said Barbara, in her artless way, lifting her eyes languidly and looking at Mrs. Grayson. "What a kind lady you are! God will bless you for being good to poor little Barby."

Her voice, which was singularly soft and sweet, died faintly away, and her lids fell heavily over her eyes. Mrs. Grayson, who was touched with pity for the strange child, and who felt her interest increasing every moment, laid her hand upon her forehead. It was burning; and the sunken cheeks bore the deep flush of fever.

Two weeks passed before Barbara was able to



LITTLE BARBARA'S SICKNESS.

sit up. During the first week she was delirious for nearly three days; and the physician said that her life was in danger. In the beginning he feared that she had an eruptive fever; and there was some anxiety on the part of Mrs. Grayson for her children. But this apprehension soon gave way; and then her two little ones—Jenny and Katy—made their way to Barbara's chamber, and spent most of their time there. At first her uncomely face repelled them, but, when she spoke, the charm of her voice drew them toward her like magnetism.

The love of children was a living thing in the heart of Barbara; and she was delighted to have Jenny and Katy in her room. As soon as she was able to sit up, she amused them by various little arts and devices which she had learned, and read to them out of the books they brought to her. In the beginning of this intercourse Mrs. Grayson watched Barbara very closely, and questioned the children minutely as to what she said to them. She was soon satisfied that all was right. That

although she had come up amidst rudeness, temptation, and exposure to vice, she was untainted by the atmosphere she had been compelled to breathe; that she was pure in heart as one of her own little ones.

“Barby,” said the lady to her one day, after she was able to sit up in a chair for several hours at a time, “how would you like to live with me?”

A flash of light went over the little girl’s face, and she looked at Mrs. Grayson in an eager, hopeful, bewildered manner, as if she half thought herself dreaming.

“I’m in earnest, Barby. How would you like to live with me?”

“What could I do, ma’am?”

“My nurse is going away. Don’t you think you could take her place?”

“I love Jenny, and Katy, and the baby,” was Barbara’s answer.

“That’s one qualification,” said the lady.

“And I’m strong when I’m well.”

Mrs. Grayson thought of the two great milk-pails and was satisfied on that head.

“And I’ll do just what you tell me to do.”

“Very well, Barby, I think we may settle it that you are to live with me as my nurse. If you love the children, and are strong, and will do just what I tell you, I can ask no more.”

“But,” said Barbara, a troubled look coming into her face, “may be Mrs. Miller won’t give me up.”

“Why not?”

“She says I’m bound to her. A lady asked me once if I wouldn’t come to her house and live. When I told Mrs. Miller, she got dreadful angry, and said that if I dared go away she’d bring me back.”

“Did you ever go any where with her, and put your name, or mark, on a paper?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Then you’re not bound to her.”

“Oh yes, I am, though. She made me promise on the Bible, a good while ago, that I’d live with

her for five years. And it isn't two years yet. I didn't want to do it, but she made me."

"Why did she exact this promise, Barby?"

"I don't know, ma'am, unless it was because I was always a-working and a-doing, and got through with almost as much as two girls."

"And you think yourself bound by that promise?"

"Yes, ma'am. If Mrs. Miller won't give me up, I must go back to her. I promised on the Bible, you know."

"And to keep your promise you are willing to take up your old hard work again of feeding and milking cows, and serving around milk, instead of coming into this nice house to nurse children whom you love?"

"Yes, ma'am, if Mrs. Miller won't give me up," replied Barbara, firmly but sadly. "I promised on the Bible that I'd live with her five years, and I've only been there two years."

"But, if I understand it, Barby, Mrs. Miller forced you to make that promise."

"She said she'd beat me if I didn't do it."

"Then she compelled you."

"But, ma'am, you see I needn't have promised for all her threats. I could have stood the beating, and held my tongue, if she'd killed me. That's how it was. So, as I've promised, I'm bound."

Struck with the child's mode of looking at the question, and still more interested in her, Mrs. Grayson determined to let matters take their course between Barbara and Mrs. Miller, in order more thoroughly to test the character of this singular child.

"I must send for Mrs. Miller," she said, "and have a talk with her. Perhaps I can induce her to give you up."

Barbara was not sanguine; and Mrs. Grayson noticed that her face wore a troubled look. Her heart had leaped at the promise of a better life, in contrast with which the old hard life she had been leading for years looked harder than ever.

Mrs. Miller, who had already called several times to ask about Barbara, but who had not been

permitted to see her, was now sent for. The child shrank back and looked half frightened as the hard, coarse, determined-looking woman entered the room in company with Mrs. Grayson, and fixed upon her a pair of cold, cruel gray eyes. Something like a smile relaxed her withered face as she spoke to Barbara.

"I have sent for you," said Mrs. Grayson, "in order to have a talk about Barby."

Mrs. Miller nodded.

"Is she bound to you?"

"Yes, ma'am." Promptly and firmly answered.

"Would you like to give her up, if I'd take her?"

"No." Mrs. Miller uttered the little word resolutely.

"In what way is she bound?" queried Mrs. Grayson.

"She's bound all right, ma'am—fast and sure," replied Mrs. Miller, showing some impatience.

"And you can't be induced to part with her?"

"No, ma'am."

"Not for her good? I would like her for a nurse; and that will be so much easier for her, you know."

"She's my girl, Mrs. Grayson," replied the woman to this; "and I don't think it just right for you to be trying to get her away from me. What's mine is mine."

"I'm sorry," said Mrs. Grayson; "and particularly on Barby's account. But, if you won't give her up, why—"

She paused and looked at Barbara. There was an expression of hopelessness upon the child's face that touched her deeply.

"Why, I won't!" Mrs. Miller finished the sentence. "And now, ma'am," she added, "Barby has been a trouble to you long enough, and had better come away."

"She is not well enough to be moved for two or three days yet," said Mrs. Grayson.

"I don't know about that," replied Mrs. Miller. "She's strong. I reckon she can walk home with a little help. Come, Barby."

Barbara made a motion to rise from her chair.

"Barby can't go to-day," said Mrs. Grayson, speaking in a tone of voice that meant quite as much as her words.

"Not if *I* say so?" interrogated Mrs. Miller.

"Not even if *you* say so!" Mrs. Grayson spoke firmly, though she smiled, in order not to arouse the woman's bad temper.

"She's my girl; not yours," said Mrs. Miller.

"Sickness has made her mine until she is well enough to be moved with safety," was replied. "And I must insist upon the right which I possess."

"When do you think she will be well enough?"

"In two or three days, I hope."

"Say in three days?"

"Yes."

"Very well, ma'am. Send her home on Saturday."

"You'd better call on that day," said Mrs. Grayson.

"I shall be very busy on Saturday. Can't you send her home?"

"I would prefer to have you call," replied Mrs. Grayson.

"I'll be here, ma'am," said the old woman, rising. "And see here, Barby," addressing the little girl, in a severe tone, "don't let there be any shamming on Saturday. I shall be here for you bright an' early."

During the next two days Barbara gained strength slowly, and on Friday was able to go down stairs and about the house. The children were delighted at this, and kept with her all day. Mrs. Grayson observed her closely, and was surprised to see her so cheerful, and so interested in all that pleased Jenny and Katy. She was very quiet in her manner, and from a certain soberness of countenance, and drooping of her eyes when not doing or saying anything, it was plain that she was not insensible to the great change that awaited her on the morrow.

Saturday came, and Barbara got up early, though

still weak from her recent sickness. When Mrs. Grayson came down stairs, she found her all ready to go with Mrs. Miller, now momentarily expected.

"And so you are going to leave us, Barby?" said the lady, looking at her kindly.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Barbara, with a little faltering in her voice.

"We don't want you to go, Barby."

"Thank you, ma'am." Barbara looked grateful. "But I'm bound to Mrs. Miller, and you know she says I can't leave her."

"Barby!"

"Ma'am!"

"Mrs. Miller has no right to keep you. You can leave her if you wish to do so."

But the little girl shook her head, and answered,

"I'm bound to her, you know."

"Only by a promise which she forced you to make. She can't hold you for an hour if you choose to leave her. You can stay here and be-

come nurse to the children, and Mrs. Miller can't help it."

"I promised on the Bible," said Barbara, with great seriousness; "and that makes me bound."

Mrs. Grayson did not think it right to press the matter any further. A child's conscience is a tender thing, and already she had tested Barbara's sense of duty nearly beyond the warrant of humanity.

Mrs. Miller had promised to be around, bright and early, and she was as good as her word. In this pause she came in. Barbara turned to Mrs. Grayson, and put out her hand to her, looking up thankfully—even with love in her homely face. She did not speak. Her heart was too full. Mrs. Grayson took her hand and held it tightly.

"Well, Mrs. Miller, so you're here for Barby?" said the lady.

"Yes, ma'am. I said I'd be along this morning. Come, Barby."

Barbara drew on her hand, making an effort to

disengage it from that of Mrs. Grayson. But the latter did not relax her hold.

"I think, Mrs. Miller, you'd better let Barbara remain with me. She is not right well and strong yet, and may become sick on your hands."

"Never you fear about that, ma'am. She is not going to get sick. Come, Barby"—the woman's voice showed impatience—"I'm in a hurry!"

"Barby," said Mrs. Grayson, "go up stairs for a little while. I will call you when we want you."

Barbara hesitated, and looked at Mrs. Miller.

"Jane, take her up stairs."

The cook had Barbara out of the room in a twinkling.

Mrs. Grayson fixed her eyes on Mrs. Miller steadily for some moments without speaking.

"I don't understand this, ma'am," said the latter, sharply.

"I wish to say a word or two about Barby, that may as well not be said in her presence," replied Mrs. Grayson. "Taking the condition in which

I found her a few weeks ago as the result of your way of treating the poor child, I cannot see that it will be altogether right for me to let her go back into the cruel bondage from which sickness has released her."

Mrs. Miller's gray eyes flashed, while her cold, wrinkled face grew dark with anger.

"She's bound to me, and I'll have her, dead or alive!" she said, fiercely.

"Bound only by a promise which you extorted from her by threats, and which you wickedly made her confirm by laying her hand upon the Bible."

Mrs. Grayson spoke with severity.

"Who says so?" demanded the woman, confronting Mrs. Grayson with something of menace in her attitude.

"One who will not lie," said Mrs. Grayson, steadily and bravely returning the almost threatening gaze that was fixed upon her. "But we will not bandy fruitless words. Barby is not going back, Mrs. Miller. Even if she were bound by law, I would be a witness against you on the

charge of cruel treatment, and have the indenture broken. And now, I make you this simple proposition. In order to set the child's mind at rest, I will buy from you her services, on condition that you release her from the promises extorted by threats two years ago."

"What will you pay me?" demanded the woman.

Mrs. Grayson drew out her purse, and taking from it a ten dollar gold piece, held it up between her fingers, saying,

"That."

The woman shook her head.

"Very well. That, or nothing." Mrs. Grayson dropped the coin back into her purse, and made a movement as if she were about to leave the kitchen.

"I want my girl!" said Mrs. Miller, almost savagely.

"Barby will never go back to your house!" There was a resoluteness in Mrs. Grayson's voice and manner which left no doubt as to her being

in earnest. "Your cruel abuse has canceled all right to service from her on any plea. I have offered you ten dollars as an inducement to release her from a promise she gave you under compulsion two years ago, and which weighs upon the child's mind. If you receive the money, well—so much gain to you; if not, I will take measures to satisfy her that you broke faith by cruel treatment, thus setting her free."

"If I must, I must," said the woman, doggedly, at last. "Give me the money."

"Jane." Mrs. Grayson spoke to the cook, who had returned. "Bring Barby here."

The little girl came in with Jane, looking paler, and showing plainly the signs of a strong mental conflict. It was clear that habitual self-control was giving way.

"Barby," said Mrs. Grayson, "you are not going back to Mrs. Miller's. She gives you up to me."

There was no start, nor sudden lighting up of her face, nor marked expression of joy.

"Is it so, Mrs. Miller?" queried the lady.

"Yes," growled rather than spoke the old hag, if we must call her so.

Barby sat down without speaking, covered her face with her hands, and remained as still as a statue.

"There." Mrs. Grayson held out the glittering coin. The woman seized it eagerly, and without a word left the house:

"Barby," said Mrs. Grayson, kindly.

But Barby did not stir.

"Barby!"

No response or movement.

"See, Jane! Quick!" exclaimed Mrs. Grayson, in an excited tone.

The cook sprang forward, and was just in time to catch Barby as she fell over from the chair on which she was sitting.

Long repressed excitement, followed by a sudden reaction, had proved too much for the feeble child, not yet recovered from a prostrating sickness. She had fainted.

"Is it really true, ma'am," asked Barbara, looking up at Mrs. Grayson, half an hour afterward, from the bed where they had laid her, "that I am going to live with you? Or was I only in a dream?"

"It is true, Barby. Mrs. Miller has given you up to me."

The child continued to look at Mrs. Grayson for some moments, with an expression of love and reverence on her face, as one might look at an angel. Then she kissed her hand, and turned away to hide the signs of feeling which she could not control.

Here is the story of "little Barby's" introduction to this lady's family; where she had been living for ten years when the reader was introduced to her as a "queer little body," looking for all the world as if "modeled after one of Punch's caricatures."

Mrs. Grayson, with all her good sense and good feeling, had a vein of ambition as well as pride in her mental constitution, and these drew her into

fashionable life and inspired her with social emulations. As Barbara gained in years, strength, and intelligence, her position in the household of Mrs. Grayson, as nurse to her children, became one of the highest responsibility. Her pure, deep love for these little olive plants, and her innate sense of right and duty, caused her, after the first strong emotions of gratitude began to subside, to give up her life to their good. The mother's fondness for society took away largely from her interest in her children, and left them for the most part with Barbara, and subject to her influence. Homely as she was, to the verge of caricature, awkward in her movements, and with something that struck you on the first glance as ludicrous in her whole appearance and manner, these children had a respect and an affection for her which gilded over what was plain, even to repulsion, in the eyes of strangers, and made her seem to them almost beautiful.

Mrs. Grayson meant all that her words implied, when she said, "I don't know what we should do

without her." And yet, with all her native kindness of heart and high estimate of Barbara's qualities, she was proving, in her way, almost as hard upon her as Mrs. Miller had been. Not cruel, exacting, unkind, and brutal, like the latter—compelling exhaustive labor by force and punishments—but so neglecting her own duties as to let more than a double share fall upon Barbara. In sickness and in health, this patient, loving, earnest girl was the untiring nurse and companion of the children—six in number at the time she first passed under the reader's notice. For her there were no days of release from the routine of care and duty. Cook, chamber-maid, and waiter, all had their afternoons, once a week, and their half-Sundays. But the children could never spare Barby. Nor had Barby any wish to be spared. An afternoon to herself, weekly, or a half-Sunday, was not in all her thoughts. How could such a thought find entrance when the heart had no desire? What would the dear children, who so loved and depended on her, do, if she were away taking rest or

seeking pleasure? No, no; there were no half-days nor holidays for Barby. The mother could make her daily round of calls, and have her daily ride for health and mental recreation, and the mother could spend evening after evening at opera, ball, or party, but Barby the nurse must never leave her precious charge. The mother could forget her sick child in the attractions of public and social life; but the patient, loving, devoted, conscientious nurse never for a single instant of time!

No wonder that Mrs. Grayson said, "I don't know what we should do without Barby."

But human flesh is not imperishable. The nerves and muscles are not wrought of iron. You may tax the mind and body too far. The student, enamored of his books; the artist seeking to throw upon canvass or cut in marble the beautiful ideals that charm his imagination; the sterner mathematician, bending all the powers of his mind to the elucidation of propositions and theories; the ascetic, seeking the way to heaven through a denial of nature's legitimate wants—these, and other

devotees, may destroy themselves, as to natural life, through a neglect of its orderly demands, and thus become, in the eyes of the world, martyrs to art, science, or religion. And so may the humble nurse—thinking only of the children who need her care—waste her strength, and become a martyr to her undying love. But she will not get into the calendar of saints, for her life is hidden from public view. There is nothing about her that the world recognizes as heroic.

So wasted the vital powers of "little Barby," under the exhausting, never-ceasing duties that fell to her lot. You rarely saw her without a baby in her arms; and few nights of unbroken sleep blessed her weary eyelids. If the child were sick, fretful, or restless, it was Barby, not the mother, who sat up through the dreary hours; and none thought to relieve her from duty on the next day, that Nature might have a chance to win back her departed strength. She never complained, never spoke of weariness, never told of the hundreds and hundreds of wakeful hours she

passed, while all the household, except some sick or fretful little one, was sleeping.

"Have you noticed Barby's cough?" said the family physician, one day, to Mrs. Grayson.

"Not particularly. She has a slight cold, I believe," replied Mrs. Grayson. Then observing that the doctor looked serious, she added :

"Why did you ask? Is there any thing peculiar in her cough?"

"Yes; it isn't a common cough. You'd better see that she doesn't expose herself."

"I thought she'd only taken a little cold," remarked Mrs. Grayson. "She's often up at nights with the children. Do you think she requires medicine, Doctor?"

"It is always best to take things in time," the doctor replied.

"Shall I send for her?"

"Yes; I think it will be well for me to ask her a few questions."

So Barby was sent for. She came down from

the nursery with a great chubby baby in her arms, and two little ones holding to her dress.

“Barby,” said the lady, “the doctor wants to ask you about your cough.”

“Me! My cough?”

She spoke in evident surprise.

“Yes, Barby,” said the doctor, kindly; “I noticed to-day that you coughed frequently, and I thought I would ask you about it before I went away.”

“Oh, it’s nothing,” replied Barbara; “nothing at all; only a little tightness here”—laying her hand across her breast.

“How long has it been troubling you?”

“I’ve had it a good while.”

“And it grows worse?”

“Not much.”

“Have you a pain in your breast or side?”

“Yes, sir; always a little in my right side; but I don’t mind it.”

“How do you sleep?”

“Sound enough, when I once lose myself.”

"How soon do you get to sleep?"

"Never much before one or two o'clock."

"How comes that, Barby?" queried the doctor.

"Willy frets a great deal in the first part of the night, and I have to be up and down with him."

"But you sleep soundly after that?"

"Yes, sir; until about five o'clock, when little Georgy wakes."

"And you get up then?"

"Not always. I can generally manage to keep him in bed. But the dear little fellow is fast asleep by seven o'clock in the evening, and it's no wonder he is awake bright and early. I often feel condemned because I don't get up with him; but I wake in such a sweat, and feel so weak, that I can't always force myself."

"Wake in a sweat?"

"Yes, sir."

"Always?"

"Always, now."

"You never told me this, Barby," said Mrs. Grayson, in some astonishment.

"I never thought of telling you, ma'am. It isn't any thing to complain of," replied Barbara.

"How long have you had these night-sweats?" asked the doctor.

"For two or three months."

"That will do, Barby," said he, in a kind tone of voice. "I will send you some medicines. This cough and these night-sweats must be broken."

The doctor and Mrs. Grayson looked at each other in silence, while Barby retired from the room.

"I am taken by surprise," said Mrs. Grayson, seriously.

"Rather a bad state of things, madam," responded the doctor, with gravity. "That girl must be looked to, or she will slip away from you one of these fine days in a twinkling."

"Not so bad as that, doctor!"

"Yes, just as bad as that; so you'd better look to it that she doesn't lose quite so much rest.

Nature won't bear up under the exhausting demands to which it has been subjected."

Mrs. Grayson said that she would make some different disposition of things in order to give Barby more time for sleep. And the doctor went away promising to send a package of medicine.

A new Prima Donna, with an unpronounceable name, was advertised to appear in "Il Trovatore" on that very evening, and Mrs. Grayson was going to the opera. And so, naturally enough—or, we might say, unnaturally enough—she forgot, in thoughts of her own pleasure, the pressing needs of her patient, self-denying nurse. No different disposition of things, as promised, was made, by which Barby could get a few hours of refreshing sleep during the first part of the night. Not even a thought of her humble dependent found its way into Mrs. Grayson's mind until, on going to her chamber, between one and two o'clock in the morning, she heard Willy's fretful cries in the nursery, with interludes of coughing from Barby.

"There!" she said to herself, reproachfully, "if

I haven't forgotten that girl! I meant to have made some arrangement by which she could get more sleep. I must see to this without fail to-morrow."

Quieting conscience with this good resolution, Mrs. Grayson retired, and soon lapsed into profound slumber, though Willy fretted on and Barby coughed for an hour longer.

Attention having been called to Barby with so much seriousness by the doctor, Mrs. Grayson observed her closely on the next morning, and saw, with concern, what she might have seen at any time within the previous two or three months, if she had looked carefully, that her face was pale, her eyes dull, and her whole appearance that of languor and exhaustion.

"How do you feel, Barby?" she asked.

"Very well, ma'am," was answered.

"Then your looks and words do not agree," said Mrs. Grayson. "How did you sleep?"

"Pretty well."

"Did you cough through the night?"

"A little."

"What time did Georgy wake up this morning?"

"About the usual time."

"Say five o'clock?"

"Thereabouts, ma'am."

"Did you have to get up with him?"

"Yes, ma'am. I don't think the dear little fellow was quite well."

"How long were you up with him?"

"Off and on, until day."

"What of the night-sweats you told the doctor about? Did you have them?"

"Yes, ma'am. I always have them."

"Well, this won't do, Barby," said Mrs. Grayson. "The doctor says you mustn't lose so much rest. I shall have to make some arrangement to relieve you of either Willy or Georgy at night. You must get more sleep, earlier or later."

Barby did not reply. As she stood, with her eyes upon the floor, her name was called from the nursery.

“Yes, dear,” she answered, and hurried back to her charge.

So ended the interview. But the nurse was not forgotten. Several times through the day Mrs. Grayson thought of her, and turned over the ways and means of relieving her from the exhausting demands nightly made upon her strength. Difficulties naturally presented themselves. The children were used to Barby, and so much attached to her that it was not probable either Willy or Georgy, the troublesome ones at night, would submit to being taken from her room.

The experiment was made on Willy, in order to give Barby a chance to gain sleep during the first part of the night. But he rebelled, of course; and, instead of fretting between sleep and wakefulness, screamed to the full capacity of his lungs. This was worse for Barby than the care of Willy; so, after enduring the baby’s cries for half an hour, she could hold out no longer. Leaving her bed and throwing on a wrapper, she went to Mrs. Grayson’s room, and took, almost by force, the

screaming little one from her arms. No sooner were her tender, loving tones in his ears than Willy's cries changed to murmurs of delight, as he nestled his head down upon her bosom.

"Dear pet lamb! They sha'n't take him from his Barby!" And with these assuring words, she ran back with the hushed child to the nursery and laid him in his crib beside her bed.

So that experiment proved a failure, and was not attempted again. The next trial was with Georgy, the five o'clock boy. After he was asleep, he was removed to his mother's room. Mrs. Grayson did not get home from a party until past one o'clock. It was two before she was lost in sleep. At five she was awakened by Georgy, who wanted to get up.

"Georgy can't get up now," said the mother, half-asleep and half-awake.

"Barby! Where's Barby? I want Barby!" cried the child, in a voice that expressed both passion and surprise.

"Hush! Lie still! You can't go to Barby!"

But the mother might as well have spoken to the wind. Georgy only cried the louder.

“Do you hear, sir! Stop crying this instant!”

No impression.

“You Georgy!”

The tempest raged more fiercely.

“Stop this instant, or I’ll punish you!”

The threat may not have been heard. It certainly was not heeded. Mrs. Grayson felt too uncomfortable under the double annoyance of broken sleep and stunning cries to be able to keep a very close rein on patience.

“Did you hear me?”

She had left her bed and gone over to the one occupied by Georgy.

“Hush this moment, sir! I won’t have such goings on!”

Mrs. Grayson was unheeded. Patience could hold out no longer. The hand which she had uplifted in threatening, came down upon the rebel with a smarting stroke.

“Oh, no! Please, ma’am, don’t do that!”

And a hand caught her arm that was a second time upraised. It was the hand of Barbara.

"Please, don't!" pleaded the distressed nurse, who had left her bed and come to the door of Mrs. Grayson's chamber, on the first sign of trouble. She had not stopped to throw on a wrapper; but, in her thin night-clothes, moist with the perspiration that made sleep a robber of strength instead of a sweet restorer, ran down stairs and along the cold passage to the chamber where the strife she dreaded had commenced.

"Go back to your room, Barby!" said Mrs. Grayson, with anger in her voice. "How dare you interfere!"

"Barby! Barby! Oh, Barby!" cried the child, in a voice of anguish. "Take Georgy! Oh, take Georgy!"

Hurt by the tone and words of Mrs. Grayson, Barbara retired slowly toward the door; seeing which, the child stood up screaming after her wildly, and fluttering his little hands as if they were wings to bear him to his beloved nurse.

The tender heart of Barbara was not proof against this appeal, and she returned with hesitating steps.

"Didn't I tell you to go to your room!" exclaimed Mrs. Grayson, passionately.

"Yes, ma'am; but I can't go. Let me take Georgy, won't you, please?"

The voice of Barbara was low, imploring, and husky with feeling; her face pale and distressed.

"Barby! Barby! Take Georgy!"

The odds were against Mrs. Grayson, and she yielded. Georgy sprang into the arms of his nurse, who, with tear-covered face, bore him from the room.

"I think, ma'am," said the chamber-maid, soon after breakfast, "that you'd better go over and see Barby."

"See Barby! Why? Is any thing the matter with her?"

"She's in bed yet."

"In bed!"

"Yes, ma'am. And I think she's right sick."

Mrs. Grayson waited to hear no more, but went

over quickly to the nursery, where she found Barbara in bed.

"Are you sick, Barby?" she asked, kindly, laying her hand upon the girl's forehead, which she found hot with fever.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Barby, in a dull, half-unconscious manner.

"How long have you felt sick?"

"I had a chill this morning."

"After you came from my room?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Have you any pain?"

"I feel so tight here, in my breast, that I can hardly breathe."

"Is there pain as well as tightness?"

"When I take a long breath."

And then Barby lay very still and heavy.

There was no mistaking the fact. Barby was seriously ill. Some little resistance was made by the children on attempting to remove them from her room; but they yielded when told by their mother with a hushed, serious voice, and a sober

countenance, that "Poor Barby was sick," and must be kept very quiet.

When the doctor, who was immediately called, saw the sick girl, his looks betrayed concern; and when questioned earnestly by Mrs. Grayson on leaving her room, he said that it was an attack of acute pneumonia.

"Then she is in danger?" said Mrs. Grayson, a pallor overspreading her face.

"In great danger, madam," was the emphatic reply.

"What is to be done?" asked the lady, turning her hands within and around each other, like one in pain and bewilderment of mind.

"You must keep her perfectly quiet, and give the medicines I leave in the order prescribed," said the doctor.

"Will you call in again to-day?"

"Yes. I will see her before night."

"And you think her really in danger?"

Mrs. Grayson's voice betrayed great anxiety.

"No good can arise from concealing the fact,

madam. Yes, the girl is in danger, as I have already told you."

"Don't neglect her, doctor!" Mrs. Grayson's voice choked. "Oh, if we lose Barby, what will we do?"

True, true, kind-hearted, but not always considerate lady! what will you do without this humble, unattractive, unobtrusive little body, whose face, figure, and movements excite mirthfulness or ridicule in strangers? You have forgotten Barby in your fashionable pleasures—forgotten her with a cruel forgetfulness, through which have been sapped the very foundations of her life—and now, we fear, consideration has come too late. What will you do without Barby? Did you only think of yourself and your children in this extorted exclamation? Perhaps yea, perhaps nay. The human heart is very selfish—very.

"I will not neglect her, madam!"

Did the doctor mean anything by this emphasis of the pronoun? Doubtless, for he looked steadily at Mrs. Grayson until her eyes fell. He had not

been in attendance for years in her family without comprehending the position and duties of Barby.

Reader, we will have no concealments with you—this sickness is unto death! Yes, even so!

A mysterious Providence.

Nothing of the kind! The burdens of Barby were too heavy for her, and she has fallen by the way; fallen to rise no more—fallen, just at the period when her heart was most in her duty, and those to whom she ministered most in need of her loving, patient care. Ah! if she had been rightly considered; if there had been for her, in the heart of Mrs. Grayson, a tithe of the regard in which Barby held her children, this sad martyrdom would not have taken place. But she did not mean to wrong Barby. None knew her better or valued her more. Did not Barby owe every thing to her? See from what a life of cruel hardship she had rescued her. True—all true. Yet does this mend the wrong? Your house will burn down as surely from a thoughtless exposure to fire

as through the torch of an incendiary. Destruction waits not to ask the why or the wherefore.

Day after day the fatal disease progressed with a steadiness and rapidity that set medical skill at defiance; and when at last it became apparent to all that the time of Barby's departure was at hand, a shadow of deep sorrow fell upon the household of Mrs. Grayson.

What would they all do without Barby? She had grown into the whole economy of things; was a pillar in the goodly frame-work of that domestic temple; and how was she to be taken away without a loss of strength and symmetry?

But death waits not on human affairs. The feet of Barby were already bared for descent into the river whose opposite shore touches the land of immortal beauty; and in spite of skill, care, regret, and sorrow, the hour of her departure drew near, until it was at hand.

True to the last, Barby's thoughts dwelt always on the children; and she felt the disabilities of sickness as an evil only in the degree that it robbed

them of the care she felt to be so needful to their comfort and happiness. If she heard Willy cry, or Georgy complain, she grew restless or troubled. Every day she had them brought to her bedside that she might look at them, and utter, were it ever so feebly, a word of love.

“Dear, dear! Won’t I be well soon, doctor? What will the children do?”

How many times was this said even after hope had failed in the physician’s heart. At last the time came when concealment from Barbara of her real state was felt to be wrong, and the duty of communication devolved upon Mrs. Grayson.

“Barby!” she said, as she sat alone by her bedside, forcing herself to speak because she dared not any longer keep silence. “Barby!” She repeated the name with so much feeling that the sick girl lifted her dull eyes feebly to her face and looked at her earnestly. “Barby, the doctor thinks you very ill.”

“Does he?” The tones were untroubled.

“Yes; and we all think you ill, Barby.”

"I know I'm very weak and sick, ma'am." She sighed faintly.

"If you should never get well, Barby?"

"That is, if I should die." There was no tremor in her feeble voice.

"Yes, Barby. Are you willing to go?"

"If God pleases." She said this reverently, as her eyelids closed.

"And you are not afraid to die?"

The eyes of Barby opened quickly.

"No, ma'am," she answered, with the simplicity of a child.

"You have a hope of heaven, Barby?" Mrs. Grayson tried to speak calmly, but her voice did not wholly conceal the flutter in her heart.

"Children go to heaven?"

"Yes."

"I love children."

She said no more. That was her answer. After a pause Mrs. Grayson said:

"The doctor thinks you will not get well."

"As God wills it," was her calm response.

"You have done your duty, Barby."

"I have tried to, ma'am, and prayed God to forgive me when I failed."

"You have read your Bible often?"

"Every day." A light gleamed over her countenance.

"You loved to read that good book?" said Mrs. Grayson.

"Oh yes. I always felt as if God's angels were near me when I read the Bible. Won't you read me a chapter now? I haven't heard even a verse since I was sick."

Mrs. Grayson took from a table Barby's well-worn Bible, and read, with as firm a voice as she could command, one of the Psalms of David. She did not attempt to make a selection, but opened the book and read the first chapter on which her eyes rested. It was the twenty-third.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteous-

ness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Mrs. Grayson shut the book and looked at Barby. There was light all over her wasted countenance, and her dull eyes had found a new lustre.

"It is God's word," said the sick girl, smiling as she spoke; "and I always feel when it is read as though he was near by and speaking to me."

She closed her eyes again, and for a little while lay very still. Then her lips moved, and Mrs. Grayson bent low to catch the murmur of sound that floated out upon the air.

"Though I walk through the valley of the

shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me."

All was still again. Mrs. Grayson felt as she had never felt before. It seemed to her as if she were not alone with Barby, and she turned, under the strong impression, to see who had entered the room. But not to mortal eyes were any forms visible. And yet, the impression not only remained but grew stronger, and with it came a sense of deep peace that lay upon her soul like a benediction from heaven. All things of natural life receded from her thought, taking with them their burden of care, anxiety, and grief.

In this state of mind she sat for many minutes like one entranced, looking at the face of Barby, which actually seemed to grow beautiful. Then there came a gradual awakening. The consciousness of other presences grew feebler and feebler, until Mrs. Grayson felt that she was alone with Barby. No ! Barby had gone with the angels who came to bear her upward. Only the wasted and useless body was left behind, never more to en-

shrine in its rough casket that spirit of celestial beauty.

“Is it over?” said the doctor, who called on the next day to see his patient.

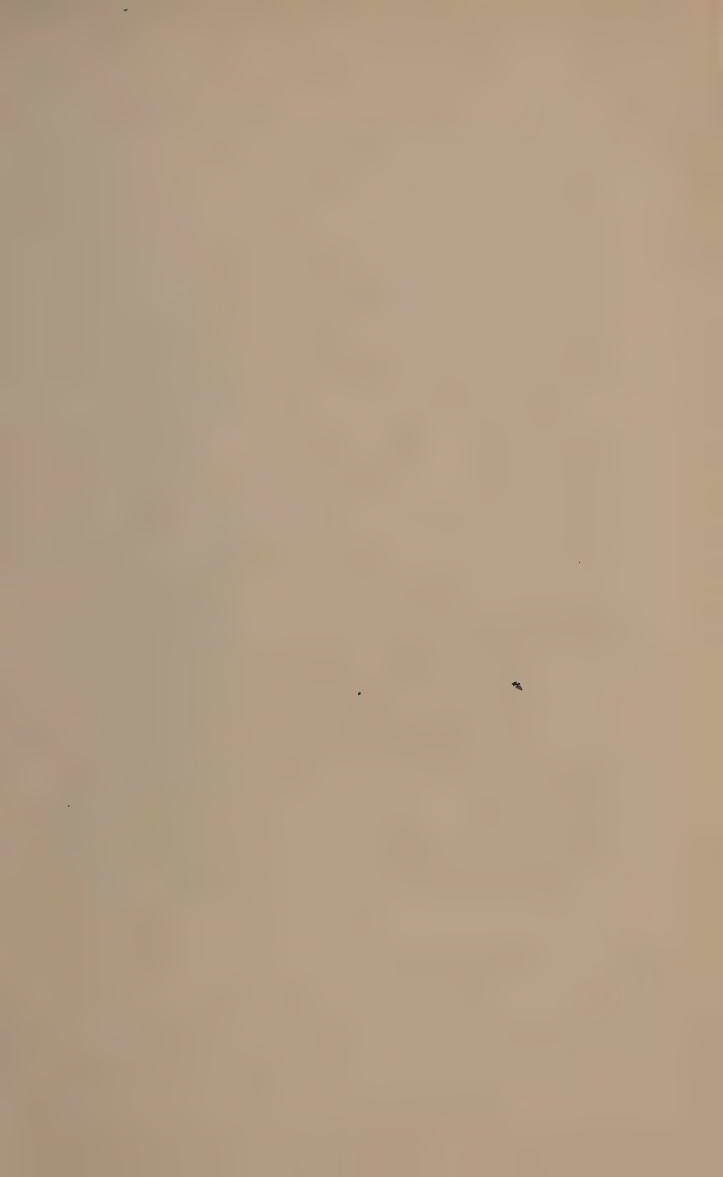
“Yes, it is over,” replied Mrs. Grayson, tears of true sorrow filling her eyes.

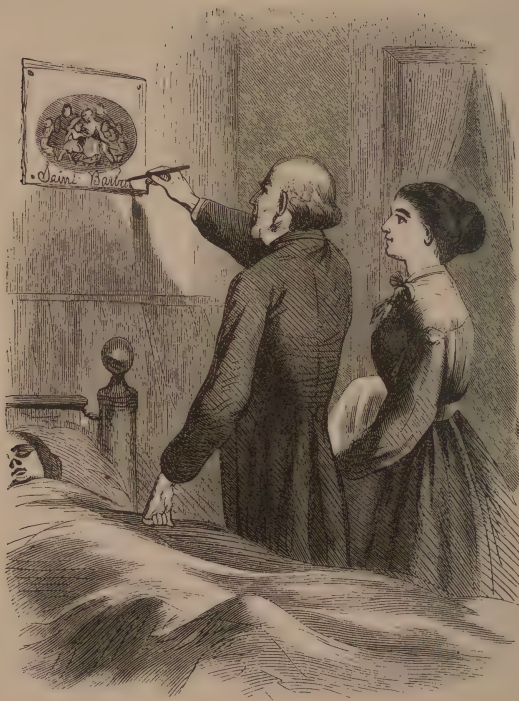
“How and when did she die?”

Mrs. Grayson told the simple but moving story of Barby’s departure.

“And went right up to heaven!” said the doctor, turning his face partly away to hide the signs of feeling. Then he added: “I must take a last look at Barby.”

And they moved to the room where her body, all ready for burial, was laid. On the wall of this room hung a likeness of the nurse, surrounded by the children to whom her life had been devoted with such loving care. It was a most faithful likeness, giving all her living expression—for the sun had done the work of portraiture. After looking at the soulless face of the departed one for a few moments, the doctor turned to the almost





"He wrote these two words in a bold hand on the margin below the picture—SAINT BARBARA."—Page 65.

speaking portrait and gazed at it for some time. Then taking a pencil from his pocket he wrote these two words in a bold hand on the white margin below the picture—

“SAINT BARBARA.”

And turning away left the apartment without a word.

In Mrs. Grayson's nursery, richly framed, hangs this picture of “SAINT BARBARA;” and the children stand and look at it every day, and talk of her in hushed tones, almost reverently. Of her it may with truth be written, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” Though absent in body, she is yet present in spirit, by thought and love, with the children she so tenderly cared for while in the flesh, and her influence is ever leading to good states and prompting to right actions.

Blessed Saint Barbara! The world knows you not, and the Church has failed to enroll you in the calendar of her worthies. But you are canonized

for all that; and your memory is sacred in the hearts of children. Blessed Saint Barbara! If our dim eyes could penetrate the veil, we should see you clothed in immortal beauty!



II.

GOING HOME.

“NOT ’til spring, John!” And light went out of Mrs. Orton’s face. “You promised that I should go home this fall.”

“I know I did,” was answered, a little impatiently. “But things haven’t turned out just as I expected. It costs something to go a thousand miles. I wonder that you can think of it, Mary!”

Mrs. Orton did not reply, but turned her pale, still face away, so that her husband could not see its expression, and bent down lower over the baby that slept on her lap.

Not ’til spring! and that was full five months away! Not ’til spring! The words fell upon her ears like the knell of hope. It was more than two long, long years since she had looked upon her mother’s face; two long years since, a young,

bewildered bride, she had gone out like a fluttering birdling from the soft nest of home. A thousand miles away into the distant west she had journeyed, brave in spirit, with her husband, and confident of a happy future. But the sunny picture her warm imagination had painted faded from the canvas in a few short months, and life assumed a hard, cold, unlovely aspect.

John Orton had gone to the west two or three years before their marriage, and purchased a small farm. After getting this into pretty good cultivation, and erecting a log-cabin—it was nothing more—he returned to the east to fulfill his engagement with Mary Spencer. John was too worldly and calculating to make a very ardent lover. A wife must be a “help,” in the literal sense of the word. He had got every thing on his new farm just in that condition when a wife might be brought in with advantage. Now, and not before, was he ready to marry.

The transition from a small, but neat, orderly, and well-conditioned New England home to a

log-cabin in Ohio, standing nearly a mile away from any other human habitation, was a change that could not be made without a shock of feeling. Mary's heart sank in her bosom, when, after a long and weary journey, she stood, alone with her husband, in the comfortless, almost unfurnished cabin he had attempted to describe to her, but in regard to which no words used by him had given her the remotest idea. But she loved him, and for his sake tried to put on a brave heart.

Now, Mary was not strong and robust. John Orton, in choosing her for his wife, had been a little out of his reckoning. There were girls in Clayton, the town from which he emigrated, who were much better fitted, in all respects, to become his wife, than Mary Spencer—girls, any one of whom would have taken him at a word. But Mary was such a delicate, sweet flower, that he must needs pluck her to wear—on his heart? Well, yes, he had a heart, but it beat so far down in his bosom, that few saw the pulsations. He loved Mary as tenderly as natures like his can

love; and meant to wear her on his heart. But, in his view, "life was real, life was earnest," and marriage involved something more than love. He did not take a wife as a plaything for holiday hours, nor as a mere ornament for his home; but as a co-worker in the serious business of getting ahead in the world. This being so, he had not done wisely in selecting Mary Spencer. He wanted bone and muscle, rather than heart and feeling.

It is no matter of surprise, that, from the beginning, Mary's work proved too hard for her. That almost every sunset found her with weary limbs, an aching head, and a discouraged heart. But love was strong; and she bore up bravely for the sake of her husband, whose muscles were hardening daily, thus removing him farther and farther away from the ability to comprehend her feebleness. It required only a few months to take the delicate roundness from her cheeks, and the bloom from her countenance. Subjected to unusual exposure, and worn down by exhausting toil, Mary

was all ready for the fall fevers when they came; and they seized upon her with burning eagerness. For three or four weeks she was prostrate and helpless, with no attendant but her husband, who did not feel as if he could afford domestic assistance, even temporarily. He was willing to cook for himself and hired man, rather than pay for having it done; and as he could run in from his fields every hour or two to ask if Mary wanted anything, he did not see the necessity for getting a woman in the house on her account. It worried him not a little to find her almost always with wet eyes; and he could not understand why his comforting and encouraging words had no apparent effect whatever. Sometimes he would grow impatient with her, and speak chidingly; but this only set the tears to flowing. Nothing of her real state of mind was comprehended. For him, that small western home, with its gradually improving aspect, was the central point of attraction in all the world. In a certain sense it bounded his hopes. But her heart had gone back, yearningly,

in her weakness and helplessness, to another home; and her eyes were always far away, with her heart, looking into the face of her mother. Oh! with what a sad intenseness did she long to hear that mother's voice; to feel the soft touch of her caressing hand; to lie, like a sick child, upon her bosom. All strength had died out of her—strength of mind as well as strength of body—and she lay, a passive sufferer, but with one thought ever in her mind: the thought of home and her mother.

When Mrs. Orton came up, at last, from this sickness, the things most essential for entire restoration to health were rest and change. But these she could not have. Her feeble hands had to lift the old burdens again, now twice as heavy for her as before, because more than half her strength was gone. The deep longing to visit her home in the east—to see her mother again—still weighed upon her heart. She could not push it aside. It came with the first waking moment, and lay with a heavy pressure on her feelings when sleep bore down her weary eyelids.

"Can't I go home in the spring, John?" she asked, as the cheerless winter whitened around them.

How John Orton could look into the pale, thin, longing face of that young pinner for the old fire-side and her mother's heart-beat against her own, and say, coldly, "Home, Mary?—I thought this was your home!" is more than we can understand. But it was so.

Mary answered with a gush of tears. Now John, like men of his class, have no fancy for a woman's tears. They do not understand their origin, and never know how to deal with them in a satisfactory way. Sometimes they oppose a hardness and reserve of manner—sometimes pettishness or anger. John had tried all these with Mary, but not, that he could see, to any good purpose.

"Oh! if you've set your heart on it——" he said, fretfully, on this occasion; and then stopped, suddenly, with the air of one who had forgotten himself.

Mary looked up eagerly; but John Orton did not finish the sentence.

“It’s a long and expensive journey,” he said, speaking, after a while, in a sober way, “and we are not forehanded enough yet to spare so much money as it will cost. In the fall, after the crops are in——”

But he did not say what would be done then. To his mind, Mary was unreasonable to think of such a thing as going to the East. It would cost fifty or sixty dollars; and then there would be the loss of time while she was away.

Long before the fall came, a tiny baby lay on the bosom of Mary Orton. She recovered slowly from the prostration that attended its birth, and did not regain even her former health. John was delighted with his boy; and in his manifested delight Mary found a new sense of pleasure. But the man was still at fault as to a right appreciation of the condition and wants of the delicate woman whose life and happiness were in his keeping. As soon as she was able to be about as of

old, he let the old burdens, in addition to this new one of a baby, come back to her stooping shoulders; and though no tinge of health returned to her wan cheeks, and her step grew slower day by day, his dull mind had no fear of approaching evil until she sank down at her post of duty.

One morning, in mid-winter, when her babe was nearly five months old, Mrs. Orton found, on attempting to rise, that she became so dizzy as to fall into partial insensibility. This was accompanied by a lancinating pain through the head, and such physical prostration, as made even the lifting of her arm a weary effort. There were symptoms in the case that, before noon-time, caused Mr. Orton to feel anxious, and, with some reluctance, he rode off for the doctor, who lived three miles away.

“How soon will she get about again?” asked the young farmer, following the physician into the yard, as he retired after making his first visit.

“In a month, may be,” answered the doctor,

"and, may be, not in two or three months. Your wife is a very sick woman, Mr. Orton."

"Two or three months! Why, doctor, what ails her?"

"I don't think she has much constitution," replied the doctor, "and that seems to have been overtaxed. She has a low fever, that will be hard to break. You must get somebody to take care of the baby at once."

"You alarm me," said John Orton, looking sober.

"There is reason to be concerned," was answered. "I'm afraid that, like too many of our strong, hearty farmers, you have miscalculated your wife's strength. She was only a frail, delicate thing when you brought her here; and as you have kept no regular help, she has been required to do the work of a strong, hearty woman. Since her baby was born, it has been still harder for her. I do not wonder that she has broken down. I speak plainly, Mr. Orton, as in duty bound. The fact is," and there was more warmth than usual in

the doctor's manner, "you farmers about here take a great deal better care of your horses than you do of your wives. Horseflesh is rarely overworked—woman's flesh nearly always."

The doctor was right in his prognosis. For more than two months Mrs. Orton was unable to rise from her bed; and when, at last, the disease was broken, and life began to beat more firmly in her pulses, the progress of convalescence was very slow, and did not carry the degree of health above a low range. The hue of her face remained of an unnatural whiteness, except when, at regularly recurring periods, each day, warm spots glowed on her cheeks. At these times her eyes shone with a strange lustre.

All through this lingering illness the heart of Mary pined for her mother. Oh! if she could have looked upon her face—could have felt her soft hand on her burning forehead!

"I must go home, John!" she said to her husband, as the spring began to open warmly: "I must see mother!"

"You are not strong enough for the journey," he replied.

"But I will be strong enough in a few weeks. May I go?" She leaned her hands on his arms, and looked pleadingly in his face. "Say yes, John."

But John thought of the expense, and could not get the word "yes" to his lips.

"You will not be strong enough to go alone with the baby," he objected; "and it will be impossible for me to accompany you until after harvest."

"Oh! never fear. I'll be strong enough. Say yes, dear John! Please."

John's face grew serious. He was thinking of the dollars.

"We've been at a great deal of expense all winter, Mary. I don't see how I can possibly get the money to pay the cost this spring. After the crops are in, things will be different."

After the crops are in! Ah, she had taken that

fond illusion to her heart once before, and she did not feel like trusting it again.

Spring passed into luxuriant summer, and Mary was still a pining exile from her mother's heart. John had not been very fortunate with his wheat and rye. They did not turn out more than two-thirds of a crop. He had, besides, lost a fine horse that cost him a hundred dollars. He was troubled and desponding in consequence; more particularly, as his wife could no longer bear the entire family burdens, but needed constant help.

With the advancing summer Mary found herself growing weaker instead of stronger. As her body failed, her heart-yearnings became deeper; and she would sit, often for a whole hour at a time, with her babe, now over a year old, sleeping on her lap, thought and memory away off in her old New England home. More frequently than ever, when her husband came suddenly upon her, did he find her in tears. This always worried him, and sometimes caused him to use unkindness of speech. Nothing seemed to dry Mary's eyes so

quickly as a rebuking word from her husband. But he saw that it made her cold towards him afterwards; and this he found hard to bear.

One pleasant Sunday, just as September was going out, Mary and her husband sat talking together, the baby asleep on Mary's lap. How strong the contrast between them! He, stalwart, brown, and muscular, the picture of vigorous health; she, pale, slender, and wasted. Why did he not take the baby from her arms? But he never thought of that.

While John talked of the future, and laid out plans for next year, Mary was looking backward upon the old home, to which her heart had gone. While he sighed for thrift, she sighed for her mother's face and voice.

"It is fall now, John," she said, taking courage, at last, to speak of what was uppermost in her thoughts.

"I know it is," he answered, in a changed tone, for he understood what was coming.

"And I am to go home, you know." She tried to smile in her old winning way.

John's countenance fell. He turned his face from her, and sat in silence for some time.

"You shall go next spring for certain, Mary," said he, at length. "You know how unfortunate——"

"Not till spring, John!" And light went out of the poor wife's countenance, as we saw in the opening of our story. Her pale, still face was instantly averted, and then laid down upon her babe.

Not till spring! And that was full five months away. Poor Mary Orton!

"I must go, John," she said, at length, in a kind of desperate way, turning upon him so strange a look that for a moment he was startled. "I must see mother. If you love me, let me go!"

"I never believed you would be such a baby about your mother," said John Orton, giving utterance to the first thought that came into his mind.

Mary caught her breath, and seemed like one choking for an instant, while a deadlier paleness overspread her face. Then she coughed two or three times, swallowed rapidly, and seemed troubled with something in her throat. She put her handkerchief to her mouth, and held it for a moment; when she took it away, it was stained with blood; and blood was pressing out from between her closely-shut lips!

"Take the baby, John!" she said, in a frightened voice, and as she spoke, her husband saw the blood flow from her mouth.

In less than half an hour John Orton's swiftest horse stood in a foam at the doctor's door; and the young farmer, pale-faced for once, read eagerly the doctor's countenance as the condition of Mary was described. Not much to encourage him there!

"Go back as quickly as possible, and see that she is kept perfectly still, and not allowed to speak even in a whisper. I will be there very soon after you arrive."

And the doctor turned from him at the door.

The question of going home before spring was definitely settled. The hemorrhage was of an unusually serious character, showing that the lungs were badly diseased. So much blood was lost, that the doctor saw but little to encourage him as to the final result.

For two weeks the issue of life or death hung so evenly balanced that, at each morning and evening visit, he looked forward to the vision of a still, cold face. After that, Nature began to rally a little, but so feebly, that only by days of contrast could the gain be perceived.

October had gone, and the waning year lapsed away until it was mid November; and still Marys white face lay from morning until evening, and from evening until the long-looked for morning broke again, still almost as a marble image upon its snowy pillow.

"John." Only the lips moved.

Mr. Orton bent down and listened.

"John." She looked up very wishfully.

"Won't you send for mother?"

It was the first time the word "Mother" had been spoken for his ears since that day when his cold rebuke threw all the life-blood back in wild pressure upon her enfeebled heart and lungs.

"It is a long way for your mother to come, Mary," he replied.

"Will you write for her, John?" There was little or no sign of feeling.

"If you desire it very much ; but, think, Mary, what a weary journey it will be for her ; and the winter will soon be upon us."

Winter ! Cold, white, dreary winter ! The word brought shuddering images to the heart of Mary Orton ; and she shut her eyes and lay silent for some minutes.

"I wish you would write, John." She opened her eyes, and looked steadily at her husband. There was something in her tone and something in her expression, that puzzled, and a little awed him. He objected no farther.

"Write in earnest, John," said the invalid, as

she saw her husband sit down at the little table in their bed-room, with pen and paper.

“Will you let me see the letter?” she asked, after the writing was done. John handed her the brief epistle, and she read it over twice, but did not seem altogether satisfied.

“Won’t that do?”

“Yes—yes.” But her tone was not free.

“I will write differently if you say so.”

“I guess that will do.” She shut her eyes, still holding the letter in her hand. The deathliness of her face never so struck Mr. Orton as it did at that moment; and he felt a low thrill of fear creeping along his iron nerves.

“Give me the pen a moment, John.”

Mr. Orton dipped the pen into the ink, and placing a book under the letter for it to rest upon, held his wife up in bed, while she scrawled, rather than wrote, with her feeble hand:

“If you love me, come!—MARY.”

“Isn’t it time we had an answer from home,

John?" asked the pining invalid, three or four days after the letter went on its way.

"Oh, no," was answered. "Our letter has only about reached them."

The lids fell slowly over the large, bright eyes she had turned upon her husband's face.

Three more days passed, and then the answer came. Mrs. Spencer would start in a week.

The great tears ran over Mary's cheeks as her husband read the letter from her mother.

"In a week! In a week!" she said, half to herself, a faint smile playing around her shadowy lips. "How can I wait even for one week to pass away."

Waking or sleeping, there seemed to be only one thought in the mind of Mary Orton—the thought of her mother.

"In four days she will be here." Then, as another morning broke, after a long, wakeful night, she would say—"Three more days." Another setting and rising of the sun, and it was "Two days. Oh, how can I wait so long!

It seems as if the days had lengthened into weeks!"

"How childish you have grown, Mary," said her husband, as these words came to his ears. He spoke a little impatiently.

She did not answer, but turned her face away, and he knew by signs which had grown familiar, that she was weeping silently. He felt more annoyed at this, and exclaimed, with considerable hardness of tone:

"O dear! There it is again! I can't speak, but you go to crying like a baby! I'm ashamed of you, Mary!"

There were two or three little choking sobs, and then Mrs. Orton lay as still and silent as if sleeping or dead. That night, something caused John Orton to awake among the small hours—a thing unusual with him.

"What is it, Mary?" he asked, for her voice had come to his ears. But, there was no reply, and he was soon aware that she was talking, fitfully, in her sleep.

“Yes, I am going home in the spring. Oh dear! It is such a long time to wait! In the spring—home—mother. He said I should go. Mother—mother—home—going home!”

All at once there came to the mind of John Orton, a perception of his wife’s true state—a feeble perception at best—yet distinct enough to change the man’s entire state of feeling; to fill his heart with tender pity and self-rebuke. He saw how it was with her, and comprehended something of the weary home-sickness which had saddened her life. In the morning he bent over and kissed her, saying, with unusual softness for him:

“To-morrow we may expect your mother. Only a day more to wait!”

She looked at him in evident surprise, while a faint smile played around her lips.

“I will try and be very patient, dear John!” she answered. “You must bear with me. Sickness has made me weak. And I do want to see

mother so very badly. I dreamed last night that I was dying, and she hadn't come!"

Her lips quivered, and she shut her eyes to hold back the tears that were filling them. John Orton turned quickly away from the bed. His eyes were filling also, and he wished to hide what he felt to be an unmanly weakness.

To-morrow came, and Mary Orton's head lay upon the breast of her mother, and her happy eyes looked into the face she had so longed for through many years.

And in the spring she went home, though not across the mountains into dear New England. In the spring she went to her Father's house; though not in the sweet village of Clayton. Home—home! She had sighed for home; wept for it; pined for it; dreamed of it, sleeping and waking—and now she had gone home. Happy spirit! No, it was not across the mountains, but over the river that she had passed; and as her white feet went down, unshrinkingly, into the waters, she clasped her mother's hands against her

breast, tightly—tightly—and looked into her mother's face until it faded from her view in mortal darkness.

She had gone home.



III.

SAD EYES.

THE face was fair; the lips soft and ruby; the cheeks warm with summer flushes; but the large, brown eyes were sad. It was not a painful, but a tender sadness that lay like a thin veil over their brightness. You hardly noticed it at first; but the shadow in Mrs. Percival's eyes grew more and more apparent the oftener you looked into them. They were full of light when she spoke—dancing, rippling light; but this faded out with a quickness that half surprised you, making the shadow that came after it the more noticeable.

“What can it mean?” said one friend to another. They were speaking of Mrs. Percival and her sad eyes. “Is that peculiar look hereditary—a mere transmitted impression of the soul upon

the body—or is it the sign of an inward state? Do you know anything of her early history?”

“Something.”

“Is she happy in her marriage?”

“I am afraid not.”

“Then it must be her own fault,” was answered.

“Perhaps it is.”

“Every one speaks well of Mr. Percival. I have seen a great deal of him, and hold him in very high regard.”

“In no higher regard than he is held by his wife, who knows, better than any one else can know, his worth as a man.”

“And yet you said just now that you did not think her married life a happy one.”

“There is a shadow upon it. As the wife of Mr. Percival, she is not, I fear, in her true place.”

“Are you serious in this?”

“Entirely so.”

“While to me it seems that she is just in her true place. Both are well educated, social, and

attractive; and both seem governed by high moral principles; and both have noble aims in life. Their deportment towards each other, so far as I have noticed it, is uniformly kind; and I have observed the reciprocation of little attentions while in company, not usual among married partners. They are superior to most of those around us, and, as I read them, eminently fitted for each other."

To this it was replied:

"The very elevation of character to which you refer, makes this union the more inharmonious—the lack of fitness the more fatally apparent. Lower natures may feed on husks; but these cannot,—may be satisfied with a compact that secures external good; but these must have interior likeness."

"Which does not, as you believe, exist in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Percival."

"I am very sure it does not. Hence the sad eyes that look out into the world so hopelessly."

This was said of Mr. and Mrs. Percival. Let

us go back a few years, and come near them in the time when this union was formed. There had been too great ardor of pursuit on the side of Mr. Percival. The beautiful girl who flashed across his way so dazzled him by her mental and personal charms, that he resolved to secure her hand, no matter what difficulties might intervene. And he soon found an obstruction in the way. An artist named Liston, a young man of genius, but modest and shrinking, as such men usually are, had already been attracted by this lovely girl, and she was meeting his slow and timid approaches with such tender invitations as maiden delicacy would permit. The more she saw of him, the more he charmed her. He was so different from other young men, into whose society she was thrown; so unworldly; so single of heart; so noble in all the aspirations to which he gave utterance. In her eyes, he seemed to stand apart from the world; to be of another quality—more refined, more intellectual, purer. She loved him, so far as she dared give liberty to her feelings, seeing

that he held himself at a further distance from her than some ventured to approach. In him, the faint ideal of her soul's companion stood forth embodied. When he drew near, she moved instinctively to meet him, the pulses of her interior life beating quicker and stronger. When he stood afar off, it seemed as if a thin veil of shadow had fallen around her.

The quick eyes of Henry Percival soon discovered the truth. He saw that the maiden was deeply interested in the young artist, and also that Liston worshiped her at a distance, fearing to approach, lest the beautiful star in whose light his soul found light should veil itself as a rebuke to his advances. And seeing this, he resolved to press in boldly; to win the maiden for himself; to carry off the prize another was reaching out to grasp. Percival had been more in the world than Liston; possessed a more cultivated exterior; understood men and things better; was more self-confident. Whatever he undertook to do, he strained every nerve to accomplish. Difficulties

only stimulated new effort. From a boy up he had moved steadily to the accomplishment of his ends, with a vigor and persistence that usually brought success.

“She shall be mine!” So he declared, in his heart, though he fully understood the relation which Liston and the maiden bore to each other,—so he resolved, when he knew that love had grown up between them, and that she was to the young artist as the very apple of his eye.

It happened in this case as it happens in many others. As the bold lover advanced, the less confident one retired. Percival drew very near, draping himself in sunshine, while Liston stood afar off, in shadow, looking from his dim obscurity with sad eyes upon the only being he had met who embodied his ideal of a woman. If he had drawn near—if he had given the maiden clearly intelligible signs of what was in his heart, Percival would have sought her hand in vain. But she seemed in his eyes so pure and noble—so elevated above common mortals, and himself of

such little worth—that he dared not approach and enter the lists as an openly declared suitor. The ardor of Percival had no abatement. He pressed his case with an impetuosity that bore down all obstructions, almost extorting from the doubting and bewildered girl a promise to become his wife. If Liston had not shown apparent indifference—had not held himself aloof—this promise, repented of almost as soon as made, would never have been given. Had she known that her image was in his heart, treasured and precious, Percival's suit would have been idle. But she did not know, and in her blindness she went astray, losing herself in a labyrinth from which she never escaped.

The effect on Liston, when it was known that Percival and the maiden he so worshiped were engaged, was very sad. He lost, for a time, all heart in his work—all interest in life. An intimate friend, who knew of his attachment, and understood the meaning of his altered state, divulged the secret, and so it became public property, finding its way to the maiden's ears.

“Did you know,” said a gay friend, “that you are charged with a serious crime?”

“I have not heard of the accusation. What is the crime?” she answered, smiling.

“The crime of breaking a heart.”

“Ah! Whose heart?” There was a change in the expression of her face; the smile dying out.

“Liston’s.”

“Why do you say that?” she asked, catching her breath, and showing pallor of countenance.

“Oh, haven’t you heard anything about it? Why, it’s the talk all around. He was dead in love with you, it seems, but hadn’t the courage to say so; proving the truth of the old adage, that ‘Faint heart never won fair lady.’ And now he’s moping about, and looking so woe-begone, that everybody is pitying him.”

“I’m sorry that he should have pain on my account,” was answered, with as much indifference as could be assumed. “Not a very serious case, I imagine.”

“Oh, but it is; he fairly worshiped you,” re-

plied the friend. "Do you know that an asylum is talked of?"

"Don't, don't say anything more, if you please! It's all gossip and exaggeration, of course; but still of a kind I must not hear. You forget that I am to be married in a few weeks."

The laughing light went out of the gay friend's countenance; for she saw more than she expected to see.

A few weeks passed, and the wedding night arrived, when the pale-faced maiden, true to her promise, but false to her heart, took up the burden of wifehood, staggering under the weight as it came down upon her shoulders. The young husband, when he kissed her almost colorless lips, and, gazing into her pure face, said, "Mine!" looked into sad eyes, and felt that his ardent word but half expressed the truth—that she was not, and never could be, all his own. He too had heard of Liston's attachment, and of the effect produced on him when the fact of the engagement became public, and something more than a feeling

of triumph found its way into his heart. There was at first a vague sense of uneasiness, followed by doubts and questionings. Smarting suspicion crept in. He became keen-eyed. But all he discovered was a dim veil dropping down over the countenance of his betrothed, and diminishing the splendors of its sunshine. In his eagerness to grasp the angel whose beauty had fascinated his gaze, he had rubbed a portion of lustre from her wings.

But she had taken her place by his side; and no allurements could have drawn her thence, though she walked in perpetual shadow, and though sharp stones cut her feet at every step. She was too strong in purity and truth to waver from the line of duty. The path might be difficult, but she would not turn aside, even though she failed. She had the courage to die, but not to waver.

"Mine!" said Percival, when his hot kisses were laid on the almost irresponsive lips of his bride, and even as he said it, away down in his

innermost convictions, another voice answered—
“Not mine!”

So their wedded life began. It took nearly a year for Liston, the artist, to recover from his disappointment. A few times during this period he met Mrs. Percival, and read in her inward-looking eyes that she was not a happy wife; and more than this he read, penetrating by quick-sighted perception the veil in which she had enveloped herself. After this period, he was master of his soul again, and dwelt in his art. But all who met him noticed, and many spoke of, a subdued sadness in his eyes. Years passed, and though he went into society, Mr. Liston did not marry. As an artist he rose steadily, and some of his works attracted much attention. Among them was a personification of “Hope,” in the single figure of a woman exquisitely beautiful, yet showing in every feature of the tenderly pure face, trial and triumph.

“Have you seen Mr. Liston’s ‘Hope,’ at the Academy?” asked a friend, addressing Mrs. Per-

cival, a few days after the painting had been placed on exhibition.

“Not yet,” was answered.

“You must see it. Every one is charmed. And, do you know, it bears a remarkable likeness to yourself; I’ve heard several persons speak of this. By the way, is it a compliment or an accident? It is said that he is one of your old admirers.”

The friend laughed, and in laughing, so dimmed her own vision, that she did not see the strange, startled look, that came, for an unguarded moment, into Mrs. Percival’s eyes.

In company with her husband, Mrs. Percival went to see the “Hope” of Mr. Liston. Something in the ideal figure held her as by fascination. Mr. Percival recognized the likeness, and with a sense of uneasiness. Many times he turned his eyes from the painting to the countenance of his wife. Its expression was not satisfactory. There was more in it than admiration for a fine picture. From the painting, he saw her once turn half around,

suddenly, as if spoken to; but no voice had reached his ear. He turned also, in the same direction, and looked into the artist's face; but did not encounter his eyes, for they were resting on his wife.

The act of Mrs. Percival was but momentary. She turned again to the picture, at the same time placing her hand on the arm of her husband, and, by a movement, intimating her wish to leave that part of the gallery. Mr. Percival did not fail to observe that his wife's interest in the Exhibition was from this time partial and forced.

"Are you not well?" he asked, in his usual kind, but half-constrained manner.

"My head is aching," she answered, forcing a smile.

"Shall we go home?"

"If you have staid long enough," was replied.

And so they went away, not again venturing to look at Mr. Liston's "Hope," and not again visiting the Academy while it was there.

The eyes of Mrs. Percival were just a little sadder after this, and so were the artist's eyes; and

the heart of Mr. Percival was just a little heavier. But all three were pure enough, true enough, and strong enough to bear the burdens this great error had laid upon them, though in bearing there was pain that made life wearisome.

Alas for these sad eyes! See well to it, maiden, that in accepting some boldly wooing lover, you do not, like Mrs. Percival, commit one of life's saddest errors, and so look out with dreary eyes upon the world through all your coming years.

And see to it, over ardent young man, that in the eagerness of pursuit you do not make captive one who can never be wholly your own. See to it that you do not rob another of the good designed for him, and at the same time rob yourself of the highest blessing in life. The soul-lit eyes that so charm to-day, may haunt you with accusation through all the coming years; the face so bright and beautiful, wear a perpetual veil of shadows. In the name of all that the heart holds sacred, beware of an error here!

IV.

GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY.

WE had not been drawn by the Sheriff—were not, legally, a Jury—there had been no formal submission of a case for our decision. But we were a tribunal for all that, and had a neighbor on trial. He was not present, of course; before such tribunals, the accused is never summoned to appear either in person or by counsel. He is tried and condemned, or acquitted, without a hearing.

The case under consideration was a serious one, involving the crime of wife-murder. A woman beloved of all who knew her, had slowly faded and wasted in our eyes, until, like a withered autumn-leaf, she had dropped upon the river of death, and floated from our sight. Her husband had exhibited an almost unmanly sorrow at the grave;

and so drawn toward himself a more than usual degree of observation. We were talking, sadly, of our departed friend; of her virtues, her graces, her sweetness of temper, her devotion to all duties, and patient self-denial, when one referred to her husband, saying:

“I do not wonder that his heart was nearly broken. I shall never forget that burial scene as long as I live.”

To this there came an impatient reply:

“It was all a sham!”

There followed startled looks and a rapid exchange of meaning glances. The last speaker added:

“Or, if the emotion were real, it sprang from remorse, not sorrow.”

Immediately the Jury were formed, involuntarily and without regard to the legal number. Witnesses came, unsummoned, to the stand.

“It is a clear case of wife-murder,” said one, speaking out boldly. “I knew Mary Green well. We were friends at school. I was her bridemaid,

and have been intimate with her ever since her marriage, and my testimony is, that if her husband had treated her with considerate kindness, she would have been alive to-day. But he was selfish, exacting, mean, and unsympathizing. He not only permitted her take up burdens too heavy for her strength, but cruelly added to these burdens; and when, weary to faintness, she stumbled by the way, or uttered a complaint, he gave her frowns instead of smiles. I know! I have seen it all! And I bear my testimony against him. For years she has been fading and failing; yet, he gave her no respite. She was simply the slave of his convenience; and he exacted service to the last."

"Mr. Green is ~~an~~ honorable and a just man," spoke out a witness in his favor, as this accuser ceased. "I have had good opportunities of knowing him—have seen his integrity put to trial."

"Have you seen him in his home?" was queried.

"No."

"It is of his home-life that we are speaking."

A pause followed.

"A man," continued the last speaker, "may be upright in his dealings with men; may be just to the uttermost farthing; may not depart from integrity when sorely tempted—and yet be a miserable tyrant at home. Now, I have observed Mr. Green in his family, and can testify that he was not a considerate and loving husband;—that his conduct towards his wife was bad."

"In what respect?" queried one. "Was he ill-natured? — passionate? — abusive? — neglectful? How was his conduct bad?"

"He was neglectful, for one thing," answered the other. "Now, every true woman knows that neglect and indifference are, in certain cases, as sure to destroy life as a slowly working poison."

"Did he neglect her? I never imagined that."

"Not as some men neglect their wives. There was nothing of that coarse, brutal indifference that we sometimes see; but still neglect. She was too much out of his thought. He treated her as if she were of no account beyond the sphere of house-

hold and maternal duty ; as if she were only a useful piece of machinery, working for his comfort—feeling nothing and desiring nothing. Did you ever see them together at a place of public amusement ?”

None answered in the affirmative.

“I have seen him often at the theatre and opera, but rarely in company with his wife. He did not go alone. He was always in attendance on some lady ; usually a relative or friend visiting in his family.”

“I can speak to the point on that head,” remarked another, coming in with her testimony, and manifesting considerable warmth of feeling. “I have spent days at a time with Mrs. Green. We were friends of long standing ; and I loved her dearly. It was just as you have heard. Mr. Green never seemed to imagine that his wife needed change, recreation, and amusement like other people. Once, while I was in the family, the wife of Mr. Green’s cousin, who resided in Cincinnati, made them a visit. She was a handsome,

lively, companionable woman, who had left three children and a husband at home to the care of domestics, while she enjoyed herself for a few weeks at the east. Mr. Green gave up all his leisure to her entertainment. He drove her out to see the notable places in and around the city, and took her to the Academy of Music, or to the theatre as often as two or three times in the week."

" 'Won't Mrs. Green go with us?' inquired the cousin, when the first drive out was proposed.

" 'Oh, no, you needn't ask her. She never goes anywhere,' replied Mr. Green, before his wife had time to answer.

" 'I looked at Mrs. Green. She smiled faintly, and said, in her quiet, patient way: 'I'm very much occupied this afternoon.'

" 'She's always occupied,' remarked Mr. Green. I did not make out whether he meant apology or sarcasm. But there was no mistaking the indifference of his manner. I looked from the fresh, healthy countenance and bright eyes of the cousin, to the thin, pale face, and languid eyes of his

wife, and my heart grew angry. For her, change, fresh air, and the exhilaration of a ride were as necessary to health and life as food; and he had not even asked her to accompany them,—nay, when the cousin inquired if she were not going, he had been in haste to answer for her in the negative.

“I did not ride out with Mr. Green and his cousin, though the compliment of an invitation was extended. Mrs. Green put on a faint show of satisfaction at the enjoyment her relative was to have; but, after they were gone, I saw tears in her eyes, and noticed a change in her manner. Her face was paler, and there was an expression about her mouth that I did not clearly understand; but it was indicative of mental pain.

“‘Are you not well?’ I asked. She had laid her head down, suddenly, on a small work-table by which she was sewing. She did not answer immediately. When she did reply, I perceived that her voice was disturbed:

“‘My head aches badly.’

“‘How long has it been aching?’ I inquired.

“‘For half an hour or so.’

“‘You should have ridden out,’ I said. But she made no response. A little while afterward I saw her shiver. Putting one of my hands on hers, I was chilled by its coldness. The touch made her shiver again. She was in a nervous chill. Through a little persuasion, I got her into bed, and put hot water to her feet. In the course of half an hour she was better; but the headache remained.

“Mr. Green and the cousin came back from their ride with every evidence of having enjoyed themselves. Both were in high spirits. I wondered, as I looked at the cousin’s bright, healthy face, and then at Mrs. Green’s shadowy countenance—so pale and thin—if her husband did not take note of the difference—if there was no tenderness and compassion in his heart—if he did not see that she was drifting away from him——”

“Pushed away, rather!” spoke out one of the

company, sharply. "Pushed out upon the river of death as a boat is thrust from the shore!"

"I accept your better figure of speech," said the other. "Yes, the hand that should have held her to the shore thrust her out upon the dark river, and we who loved her have lost her."

"May it not have been her own fault," was now suggested. "You know some women bury themselves amid their household and motherly cares, and resist all their husbands' efforts to draw them out into society. They shut themselves away from the bright sun and fresh, health-giving air—away from social and public life, and droop and fade, self-immolated, in their homes. A husband is not responsible, and should not be blamed for this."

"If our sweet friend who has left us," such was the reply, "had possessed a colder heart, and been less loyal to duty, she might have been alive to-day. But she had a mind of exceedingly delicate organization, and was hurt by touches that would have fallen lightly as a feather upon most hearts

Mr. Green ought to have known this. She was his wife. A true, devoted, faithful wife. If she was so buried in home-duties that she failed for lack of sunshine and air, the fault was his. Mr. Green is a close man, as we say—a saving, money-loving man. He was liberal to himself, but never to his wife. If expenditure was for his appetite, pleasure, or convenience, there was no stint; if for his wife, or general household use, he doled it out with a niggardly hand. He was perpetually des-canting on the waste of servants, the cost of living, the ruinous increase of price in every thing. The consequence was that Mrs. Green, who felt that his homilies were for her ears, and meant as a rebuke to her extravagances, (!) kept for most of the time but one servant, though she had little children, and was always worked beyond her strength. She had neither time nor heart to go out. A domestic slave—a household drudge—an imprisoned nurse—with a husband for master and driver; and she a woman of the finest mental organization, and a heart thirsting for love, and that tender con-

sideration so sweet to the soul—is it any wonder that she died? I marvel, knowing her as I did, that she lived so long.”

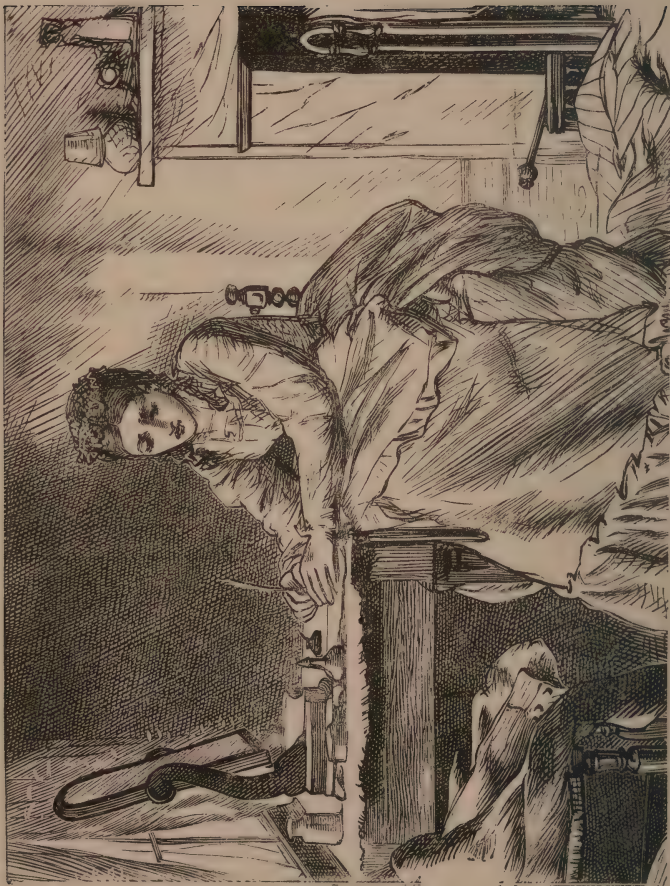
Other evidence bearing on the case was given, all going to show that Mr. Green, through years of petty home-exactions, indifference, and neglect, had been the cause of his wife's early death. Daily he saw her bearing burdens beyond a woman's strength; daily her cheeks grew whiter. Her flesh wasted, her eyes became heavier, her steps feebler, her lips and voice sadder; and yet the cruel tyrant never relented, never relaxed, until the silver cord was loosened and the golden bowl broken at the fountain!

The testimony, given in some cases with a painful detail of circumstances, was overwhelming, and the verdict, rendered without a dissenting voice, was “Guilty.” That is, guilty of wife-murder.

So far as the evidence is before the reader, he can make his own decision, and say Guilty or Not Guilty, according to his estimate of the case. If

he be a husband with a pale-faced, stay-at-home, over-worked wife, he will find, in what we have recorded, a hint for his future government that, if observed, may put off for many years the day of sorrow and bereavement.





V.

"FOR FATHER'S HONOR."

"SO much gone! I might have known how it would be!" said Mr. Sterling, looking up from the morning paper, with a most unpleasant expression on his face.

"What is gone?" asked his wife.

"My money is gone," answered Mr. Sterling, fretfully.

"What money?"

"The money I was foolish enough to lend Mr. Granger."

"Why do you say that?"

"He's dead," replied Mr. Sterling, coldly.

"Dead!" The wife's voice was full of surprise and pain. Sorrow overshadowed her face.

"Yes, gone, and my money with him. Here's a notice of his death. I was sure when I saw him

go away that he'd never come back, except in his coffin. Why will doctors send their patients from home to die?"

"Poor Mrs. Granger! Poor little orphans!" sighed Mrs. Sterling. "What will they do?"

"As well without him as with him," was the unfeeling answer of her husband, who was only thinking of the three hundred dollars he had been over-persuaded to loan the sick clergyman, in order that he might go south during the winter. "He's been more of a burden than a support to them these two years."

"Oh, Harvey! How can you speak so?" remonstrated Mrs. Sterling. "A kinder man in his family was never seen. Poor Mrs. Granger! She will be heart-broken."

"Kindness is cheap and easily dispensed," coldly replied Mr. Sterling. "He would have been of more use to his family if he had fed and clothed them better. I reckon they can do without him. If I had my three hundred dollars, I wouldn't _____"

But he checked for shame—not from any better feeling—the almost brutal words his heart sent up to his tongue.

Not many hundred yards away from Mr. Sterling's handsome residence stood a small, plain cottage, with a garden in front neatly laid out in box-bordered walks, and filled with shrubbery. A honey-suckle, twined with a running rose-bush, covered the latticed portico, and looked in at the chamber windows, giving beauty and sweetness. The hand of taste was seen everywhere—not lavish, but discriminating taste. Two years before there was not a happier home than this in all the pleasant town of C——. Now the shadow of death was upon it.

“Poor Mrs. Granger! Poor little orphans!” Well might Mrs. Sterling pity them. While her mercenary husband was sighing over the loss of three hundred dollars, the young widow lay senseless with her two little ones weeping over her in childish terror. The news of death found her unprepared. Only a week before she had received

a letter from Mr. Granger, in which he talked hopefully of his recovery. "I am stronger," he said. "My appetite is better; I have gained five pounds in flesh since I left home." Three days after writing this letter there came a sudden change of temperature; he took cold, which was followed by congestion of the lungs; and no medical skill was sufficient for the case. The body was not sent home for interment. When the husband and father went away, two or three months before, his loved ones looked upon his face for the last time in this world.

Love and honor make the heart strong. Mrs. Granger was a gentle, retiring woman. She had leaned upon her husband very heavily; she had clung to him as a vine. Those who knew her best, felt most anxious about her. "She has no mental stamina," they said. "She cannot stand alone."

But they were mistaken. As we have just said, love and honor make the heart strong. Only a week after Mr. Sterling read the news of the young

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minister's death he received a note from the widow.

"My husband," she said, "was able to go south in the hope of regaining his health through your kindness. If he had lived, the money you loaned him would have been faithfully returned, for he was a man of honor. Dying, he left that honor in my keeping, and I will see that the debt is paid. But you will have to be a little patient with me."

"All very fine," muttered Mr. Sterling, with a slightly curling lip. "I've heard of such things before. They sound well. People will say of Mrs. Granger, 'What a noble woman! What a fine sense of honor she has!' But I shall never see the three hundred dollars I was foolish enough to lend her husband."

Very much to Mr. Sterling's surprise, and not a little to his pleasure, he discovered, about three months afterwards, that he was mistaken in his estimate of Mrs. Granger. The pale, sad, fragile little woman brought him the sum of twenty-five

dollars. He did not see the tears in her eyes as he displayed her husband's note, with its dear familiar writing, and made thereon, with considerable formality, an endorsement of the sum paid. She would have given many drops of her heart's blood to have been able to clutch that document from Mr. Sterling's hands. His possession of it seemed like a blot on the dear lost one's memory.

"Katie Granger is the queerest little girl I ever knew," said Flora Sterling to her mother, on the evening of the very day on which this first payment was made. Mr. Sterling heard the remark, and letting his eyes drop from the newspaper he was reading, turned his ears to listen.

"I think her a very nice little girl," replied the mother.

"So she is nice," returned the child; "but then she is so queer."

"What do you mean by queer?"

"Oh, she isn't like the rest of us girls. She said the oddest thing to-day. I almost laughed out; but I'm glad I didn't. Three of us, Katie,

Lillie Bonfield, and I, were walking round the square at recess time, when uncle Hiram came along, and taking out three bright ten-cent pieces, he said—"Here's a dime for each of you, girls, to buy sugar-plums." Lillie and I screamed out, and were starting away for the candy-shop in an instant; but Katie stood still, with her share of the money in her hand. "Come along!" I cried. She didn't move, but looked strange and serious. "Aren't you going to buy candy with it?" I asked. Then she shook her head gravely and put the dime in her pocket, saying (I don't think she meant me to hear the words)—"It's for father's honor;" and leaving us went back to the school-room. What did she mean by that, mother? Oh, she is so strange!"

"Her mother is very poor, you know," replied Mrs. Sterling, laying up Katie's singular remark to be pondered over.

"She must be," said Flora, "for Katie has worn the same frock to school every day for 'most three months."

Mr. Sterling, who did not let a word of this conversation escape him, was far from feeling as comfortable under the prospect of getting back the money he had loaned to Mr. Granger, as he had felt an hour before. *He* understood the meaning of Katie's remark—"It's for father's honor;" the truth flashing at once through his mind.

There was another period of three months, and then Mrs. Granger called again upon Mr. Sterling, and gave him twenty-five dollars more. The pale, thin face made a stronger impression on him. It troubled him to lift the coins, that her small fingers, in which the blue veins shone through the transparent skin, had counted out. He wished that she had sent the money instead of calling. It was on his lips to remark, "Don't trouble or pinch yourself to pay faster than is convenient, Mrs. Granger," but cupidity whispered that she might take too large an advantage of his considerate kindness, and so he kept silent.

"No, dear, it's for father's honor; I can't spend it."

Mr. Sterling was passing a fruit shop, where two children were looking in at the window, when this sentence struck upon his ears.

"An apple won't cost but a penny, Katie; and I want one so badly," answered the younger of the two children, a little girl not five years of age.

"Come away, Maggie," said the other, drawing her sister back from the window. "Don't look at them any more—don't think about them."

"But I can't help thinking about them, sister Katie," pleaded the child.

It was more than Mr. Sterling could stand. Every want of his own children was supplied. He bought fruit by the barrel. And here was a little child pleading for an apple, which cost only a penny! but the apple was denied, because the penny must be saved to make good the dead father's honor. Who held that honor in pledge? Who took the sum total of these pennies, saved in the self-denial of little children, and added them to his already brimming coffers? A feeling of shame burned the cheeks of Mr. Sterling.

"Here, little ones!" he called, as the two children went slowly away from the fruit shop window. He was touched with the sober look on their sweet young faces as they turned at his invitation.

"Come in, and I'll get you some apples," he said.

Katie held back, but Maggie drew on her hand, eager to accept the offer, for she was longing for the fruit.

"Come!" repeated Mr. Sterling, speaking very kindly.

The children then followed him into the shop, and he filled their aprons with apples and oranges. Their thankful eyes and happy faces were in his memory all day. This was his reward, and he found it sweet.

Three months more, and again Mr. Sterling had a visit from the pale young widow. This time she had only twenty dollars. It was all she had been able to save, she said; but she made no excuse, and uttered no complaint. Mr. Sterling

took the money and counted it over in a hesitating way. The touch thereof was pleasant to his fingers, for he loved money. But the vision of sober child-faces was before his eyes, and the sound of pleading child-voices in his ears. Through over-taxing toil, and the denial of herself and little ones, the poor widow had gathered this small sum, and was now paying it into his hands—to make good the honorable contract of her dead husband. He hesitated, ruffling in a half absent way the edges of the little pile of bills that lay under his fingers. One thing was clear to him: he would never take anything more from the widow. The balance of the debt must be forgiven. People would get to understand the widow's case; they would hear of her self-denial and that of her children in order to pay the husband's and father's debt—in order to keep pure his honor; and they would ask, naturally, who was the exacting creditor? This thought affected him unpleasantly.

Slowly, as one in whose mind debate still went on, Mr. Sterling took from his desk a large pock-

et-book, and selected from one of the compartments the note on which Mrs. Granger had now made three payments. For some moments he held it in his hands, looking at the face thereof. He saw written down in clear figures, the sum, \$300. Seventy of this had been paid. If he gave up, or destroyed the slip of paper, he would lose two hundred and thirty dollars. It was a severe trial for one who loved money so well, to come up squarely to this issue. Something fell in between his eyes and the note of hand.—He did not see the writing and figures of the obligation, but a sad, pleading little face, and with the vision of this face came to his ears the sentence: “No, dear; it’s for father’s honor.”

The debate in Mr. Sterling’s mind was over. Taking up a pen he wrote across the face of Mr. Granger’s note the word “Cancelled,” and then handed it to the widow.

“What does this mean?” she asked, looking bewildered.

"It means," said Mr. Sterling, "that I hold no obligations against your husband."

Some moments went by ere Mrs. Granger's thoughts became clear enough to comprehend it all. Then she replied, as she reached back the note:

"I thank you for your generous kindness, but he left his honor in my keeping, and I must maintain it spotless."

"That you have already done," answered Mr. Sterling, speaking through emotions that were new to him. "*It is white as snow!*"

Then he thrust back upon her the twenty dollars she had just paid him.

"No, Mr. Sterling," the widow said.

"It shall be as I will!" was the response. "I would rather touch fire than your money. Every dollar would burn upon my conscience like living coals!"

"But keep this last payment," urged the widow. "I shall feel better."

"No, madam! Would you throw fire upon

my conscience? Your husband's honor never had a stain. All men knew him to be pure and upright. When God took him, he assumed his earthly debts, and did not leave upon you the heavy burden of their payment. But he left with you another and most sacred obligation, which you have overlooked in part."

"What?" asked the widow, in an almost startled voice.

"To minister to the wants of your children; whom you have pinched and denied in their tender years—giving of their meat to cancel an obligation which death had paid. And you have made me a party in the wrong to them. Ah, madam!"—Mr. Sterling's voice softened very much—"if we could all see right at the right time, and do right at the right time, how much of wrong and suffering might be saved! I honor your true-hearted self-devotion; but I shall be no party to its continuance. As it is, I am your debtor in the sum of fifty dollars, and will repay it in my own way and time."

Mr. Sterling made good his word. Under Providence, this circumstance was the means of breaking through the hard crust of selfishness and cupidity which had formed around his heart. He was not only generous to the widow in after years, but a doer of many deeds of kindness and humanity to which he had been in other times a stranger.



VI.

WOUNDED.

“SIX hundred and forty-three wounded!”

“If that were all!” My wife spoke in a sad voice. “If that were all!”

“The return is given as complete,” I said, referring again to the newspaper which I held in my hand. “One hundred and forty-one killed, and six hundred and forty-three wounded.”

“A fearful list, but it is not all,” my wife answered. Her tones were even sadder than at first. “A great many more were wounded—a great many more.”

“But this is an official return, signed by the commanding general.”

“And so far, doubtless correct. But from every battle-field go swift-winged messengers that kill or wound at a thousand miles instead of a

thousand paces—bullets invisible to mortal eyes, that pierce loving hearts. Of the dead and wounded from these, we have no report. They are casualties not spoken of by our commanding generals.”

I had not thought of this; or, at least, not with any realizing sense of what it involved. My wife resumed:

“Let us take the matter home. We have a son in the army. The ball that strikes him strikes us. If in that list of killed and wounded we had found his name, would there have been no bayonet point or shattering bullet in our flesh? I shiver at the thought. Ah, these invisible messengers of pain and death wound often deeper than iron and lead!”

As she thus spoke, my eyes were resting on the official list, and I saw the name of a friend. An ejaculation of surprise dropped from my lips.

“What?” My startled wife grew slightly pale.

“Harley is wounded!”

“Oh dear!” The pallor increased, and she

laid her hand over her heart—a sign that she felt pain there. “Badly?” She tried to steady her voice.

“A ball through his chest. Not set down as dangerous, however.”

“Poor Anna! What sad tidings for her!” My wife arose. “I must go to her immediately.”

“Do so,” I answered.

Soon afterward we went out together; I to my office, and she to visit the wife of our wounded friend.

It is strange how little those who are not brought into the actual presence of death and disaster on the battle-field realize their appalling nature. We read of the killed and wounded, and sum up the figures as coldly, almost, as if the statistics were simply commercial. We talk of our losses as indifferently as if men were crates and bales. I do not except myself. Sometimes I feel as though all sensibility, all sympathy for human suffering, had died out of my heart. It is, perhaps, as well. If we perceived to the full extent the

terrible reality of these things, we would be in half-paralyzed states, instead of continuing our useful employments by which the common good is served. We cannot help the suffering nor heal the wounded by our mental pain. But let us see to it that, through lack of pain, we fail not in ministration to the extent of our ability.

When I met my wife at dinner-time, her face was paler than when I parted with her in the morning. I saw that she had been suffering, while I, intent for hours upon my work, had half forgotten my two wounded friends—Harley and his wife; one pierced by a visible, and the other by an invisible bullet.

“Did you see Anna?” I asked.

“Yes.”

“How is she?”

“Calm, but hurt very deeply. She only had the news this morning.”

“Is she going to him?”

“There has not been time to decide what is best. Her husband’s brother is here, and will

get as much information by telegraph to-day as it is possible to receive. To-night or to-morrow he will leave for the battle-field. Anna may go with him."

"She appeared to be hurt deeply, you say?"

"Yes," replied my wife; "and was in most intense pain. Every line in her face exhibited suffering. One hand was pressed all the while tightly over her heart."

"What did she say?"

"Not much. She seemed looking into the distance, and trying to make out things seen but imperfectly. If he were to die I think it would kill her."

"Two deaths by the same bullet," I said, my thoughts recurring to our morning conversation.

In the evening I called with my wife to see Mrs. Harley. A telegram had been received stating that her husband's wound, though severe, was not considered dangerous. The ball had been extracted, and he was reported to be doing well. She was going to leave in the night train with

her brother-in-law, and would be with her husband in the quickest time it was possible to make. How a few hours of suffering had changed her! The wound was deep and very painful.

It was nearly two months before Harley was sufficiently recovered to be removed from the hospital. His wife had been permitted to see him every day, and to remain in attendance on him for a greater part of the time.

"Did you know that Mr. Harley and his wife were at home?" said I, on coming in one day.

"No. When did they arrive?" was the answer and inquiry.

"This morning. I heard it from Harley's brother."

"How are they?" asked my wife.

"He looks as well as ever, I am told, though still suffering some from his wound; but she is miserable, Mr. Harley says."

A shadow fell over my wife's face, and she sighed heavily. "I was afraid of that," she said.

"I knew she was hurt badly. Flesh wounds close readily, but spirit wounds are difficult to heal. These invisible bullets are almost sure to reach some vital part."

I met Mr. Harley not long afterwards in company with his wife. His eyes were bright, his lips firm, his cheeks flushed with health. You saw scarcely a sign of what he had endured. He talked in a brave, soldierly manner, and was anxious for the time to come when the surgeon would pronounce him in a condition to join his regiment. His wound, when referred to, evidently gave him more pleasure than pain. It was a mark of distinction—a sign that he had offered even life for his country.

How different with Mrs. Harley! It touched you to look into her dreamy, absent eyes—on her patient lips and exhausted countenance.

"She has worn herself out in nursing me," said her husband, in answer to a remark on her appearance. He looked at her tenderly, and with just a shade of anxiety in his face. Was the

truth not plain to him? Did he not know that she had been wounded also?—That two balls left the rifle when he was struck, one of them reaching to his distant home?

“In three weeks I hope to be in the field again, and face to face with the enemy.” He spoke with the ardor of a strong desire, his eyes bright, and his face in a glow—wounding, and the pain of wounding all forgotten. But another’s eyes became dim as his brightened—another’s cheeks paled as his grew warm. I saw the tears shining as Mrs. Harley answered, in an unsteady voice,

“I am neither brave enough nor strong enough for a soldier’s wife.”

She had meant to say more, as was plain from her manner, but could not trust herself.

“Oh, yes you are, brave enough and strong enough,” replied Mr. Harley, with animation. “Not every one could have moved so calmly amidst the dreadful scenes of a camp hospital after a battle. I watched you often, and felt proud of you.”

"If she had not been wounded also—" my wife began; but Mr. Harley interrupted her with the ejaculation,

"Wounded!" in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, wounded," resumed my wife; "and, as now appears, nearer the seat of vitality than you were. Did you not know this before, Mr. Harley?"

My friend was perplexed for a little while. He could not get down at once to my wife's meaning.

"When you were struck, she was struck also."

"Oh yes!" Light broke in upon Mr. Harley. He turned quickly towards his wife, and saw in her face what had been unseen before; the wasting and exhaustion that come only from deep-seated pain. He had thought the paleness of her countenance, the weakness that made her step slow and cautious, only the result of overtaxed muscles and nerves. But he knew better now.

"I didn't think of that," he said, with visible anxiety, as he gazed into his wife's countenance.

“Our wounds, so ghastly to the eyes, often get no deeper than the flesh and bone. The pain is short, and nature comes quickly to the work of cure with all her healing energies. We suffer for a while, and then it is over. We are strong and ready for the conflict again.”

“But,” said my wife, “into the homes that stand far away from battle-fields come swift-winged messengers that wound and kill as surely as iron hail. They strike mothers, wives, sisters—some with death wounds, all with the anguish of vital pain. Alas for these wounded! The healing, if it follows, is never, as the surgeons say, by first intention, but always slow, and often through abscess and ulceration. The larger number never entirely recover. They may linger for years, but do not lose the marks of suffering.”

A long silence followed. There were others present who, like Mr. Harley, had never thought of this. I noticed, that for the hour we remained together he was tenderer towards his wife, and more than once I saw him looking at her, while

she was not observing him, with a troubled countenance. He did not again speak of the early period at which he expected to join his regiment.

On the day following, another long list of killed and wounded was given to the public. As I read over the names and counted the numbers, my thought came back from bloody field and suffering hospital. "These are not all," I said. "Alas! not all. The ball struck twice, thrice; sometimes oftener. There is pain, there is anguish, there is wounding even unto death, in many, many homes within a thousand miles of that gory place. Some are alone and neglected—dying on their battle-field with none to put even a cup of water to their lips—some are with loving friends who yet fail to stanch the flow of blood, or bandage the shattered limb—some cover their wounds, hiding them from all eyes, and bear the pain in chosen solitude. The sum of all this agony, who shall give it?"

Our wounded! If you would find them all,

you must look beyond the hospitals. They are not every one bearded and in male attire. There sat beside you, in the street car just now, a woman. You scarcely noticed her. She left at the corner below. There was not much life in her face; her steps, as they rested on the pavement, were slow. She has been wounded, and is dying. Did you notice Mrs. D—— in church last Sunday? "Yes; and now I remember that she was pale, and had an altered look." One of our wounded! Do you see a face at the window? "In the marble-front house?" Yes. "It is sad enough! What in-looking eyes!" Wounded! Ah, sir, they are everywhere about us. Already from over a hundred battle-fields and skirmishing-grounds have been sent these missives of pain and death. They have penetrated unguarded homes in every city, town, and neighborhood in our once happy and peaceful country, wounding the beloved ones left there in hoped-for security. For such there is balm only in Gilead—God is their physician.

VII.

LITTLE MARTYRS.

A NEW "Book of Martyrs" is yet to be written, and one that will appeal as strongly to human sympathy as the terrible record of suffering made by Fox. It will not exhibit the writhing victim of cruel bigotry in the midst of consuming fire, broken on the wheel, or tortured by the rack—nor take the reader a long journey into the middle ages of darkness and superstition, where all things lie in a kind of dreamy indistinctness. It will be a book of the present time, and record the sufferings of children—not of men and women,—of children in homes of luxury, as well as in homes of penury. Children of Christian parents, as well as children of the vile and the vicious. If faithfully written, it will exhibit an aspect of

human life quite as painful to contemplate as that presented to us in the old Book of Martyrs.

Not ours the task to write such a book. We could not linger over the details, nor torture other hearts than our own. The work must be done by one of sterner stuff. It will include two classes of martyrs—those sacrificed to neglect and cruelty, and those who fall victims to false ideas and mistaken notions of duty and discipline.

How sad it is to think that among helpless children there is so much wrong and suffering, and that all over our grave-yards and cemeteries green mounds swell up from the level earth to mark the spots where sleep the little martyrs of our homes.

You look at us, bereaved mother, with a sober face and rebuking eyes, as if we meant you—as if, in our belief, the low-creeping periwinkle that covers with greenness and decks with spring blossoms the resting-place of your beloved child, but marks the spot where the bones of a martyr are laid—and you repel the accusation of cruelty implied in our words.

“Well, perhaps you *are* meant.”

And now there is a flash of indignation, as well as rebuke in your face, and we hear you say that it was by scarlet fever that your baby died. That no mother ever cared for a child more tenderly than you cared for this lost darling.

But, for all that, the little hillock in the graveyard on which your tears have fallen so many times, swells greenly above the grave of an infant martyr. Bear with us a little while, as we revive some memories of your past. You recollect that fine theory of yours about cold water.

You look at us wonderingly.

Didn't your mother and kind-hearted aunt Mary remonstrate, over and over, against the cold bath to which that tender babe was subjected every morning? We need not remind you how the shrinking child clung to you and screamed, in dread of the icy plunge. But, you were wedded to a false idea, and sacrificed a helpless infant to your blind persistence. Somewhere you had heard it said that babies should have a cold bath every

morning, to harden and make them healthy, and ignoring your mother's experience, and the plain common sense of the matter, you sent a cold chill daily to the heart of that shuddering little one, reducing the vital forces, and leaving, in consequence, many unguarded avenues where disease might gain an entrance. Don't you remember the blue lips, the cold little feet and fingers, the still languor that often followed these daily chilling ablutions? Ah, sad-hearted mother! that was all wrong. The tender flesh of an infant loses heat too rapidly for exposure like this. How often did aunt Mary plead for just one cupfull of hot water in the cold brimming basin to take off the chill, as she said? How often did your mother say—"Daughter, you will kill that child!" But, you heeded them not, being wise in your own conceit.

And now, let us remind you of that winter morning, when, floating in baby's bath-tub were bits of ice. You felt well and strong. The warm blood tingled in your finger-tips, and glowed all over your body; but baby had been restless through

the night, and now seemed dull, and inclined to sleep. But you would wake him up with a laughing dip in the accustomed bath. Poor little sufferer! It was a cruel thing in you to plunge his warm body deep down into the icy fluid! Was there no pity in your heart? You laughed and talked to him gayly. But was not this like mocking at his misery?

Well, there was no healthy reaction after this. He lay quieter than usual, or fretted, at times, all day. At night he was a little feverish. Ah! there was a fatal epidemic in the air, and you had taken away the power of resistance. He would have passed the danger safely but for this fatal bath. That threw the trembling balance against him, and he died of scarlet fever.

You don't believe it!

Neither belief nor unbelief can alter the fact.

"It is cruel to say all this, even if true. Why lacerate a heart-already bleeding?"

If, by causing pain in your heart we can save other babes from martyrdom, our duty is clear.

And so, we have told you the truth, hard though it is to be borne.

“But no such sin lies at my door,” we hear from the lips of another.

You speak confidently.

“I had a tenderer heart than that. My darling’s bath was always warm. But he went from me, by the door of death, heavenward.”

Stricken down in the budding of life by his mother’s pride and vanity.

Nay, do not flush so warmly! Turn away those indignant eyes.

“You have spoken hard and cruel words against me.”

Let us see if they do not involve the truth. That is what we are searching after. We must not pause to ask who the truth will hurt. The past is crystalized into unchangeable facts, and for use in the present it is right to hold these facts up in the clear sunlight.

No, grieving mother, you did not sacrifice your child to ignorance and self-will. But you laid

him on another altar—the altar of pride and vanity. You are silent from astonishment at so overwhelming a charge. Be calm, and let us talk together. He was a beautiful child, and you were so proud of him. Yes, I see it in your eyes. There was never a prouder mother than you, and pride was stronger than love.

“Not true!”

Let us see. If love had been stronger than pride, would he have gone forth with naked legs on those frosty December days? A red spot burns on your cheek. If love had been stronger than pride, would that little white bosom, and those fair, round arms, have been so often bared to the winds that tossed his glossy curls—cold winds, whose chill crept nestling in among the sensitive air passages, leaving there the seeds of inflammation and obstruction? Didn't the doctor say to you, on one occasion—“Madam, that is not safe?” and didn't you smile at his warning, and let the child go out, half naked, though the air was press-

ing in from the cold north-east, laden with moisture?

Not true? Think again. And didn't his anxious grandmother, around whose warm heart the child had entwined himself, remonstrate over and over again? But he looked, to your eyes—or, to speak more accurately, he looked to you, through other people's eyes—so handsome in that Highland costume, that it was not to be thrown aside. Don't you remember how, on one cold day, nurse brought him home from his grandmother's, with his legs bundled up in a pair of thick woolen gaiters, and how provoked you were about it? "Just think of what a ridiculous figure he must have cut! What did the people think!" Those were your very words. There was no thought of the child's health or comfort—only of how he looked to other people! Think over all this calmly, and say if it be not so.

And now, that busy memory is at work, just call to mind that clear, bright day in March, when the sun shone out with such a spring-like promise.

How lovely looked your darling as you held him up, fresh and ruddy, from his morning bath—a warm bath.

“The day is so fine, pet must go out.”

So you tell nurse to get herself ready, while you dress him for a walk in the open air. But how did you dress him? Nurse said—

“Indeed, ma’am, I think it’s too cold yet for bare little legs.”

“Oh, he’ll be warm enough,” you reply, confidently.

“Hadn’t he better have a scarf round his neck, ma’am?”

But that sweet white neck and bosom are too beautiful to be hidden from admiring eyes, and so you will not consent to the scarf.

Well, when he came home after an hour’s absence, how lovely he did look! What bright eyes and glowing cheeks. But, he was just a little hoarse.

We need not go on. All the rest is too deeply imprinted on your memory. There was a sudden

and violent attack of croup at midnight, and in less than twenty-four hours the seal of death was on his pallid countenance.

Over the way has just been hung out a bunch of black crape, tied with a white ribbon. And so, the baby is dead. Dear little baby! How often have we looked at its pale, puny face, held close to the window pane. The doctor went there often, for the baby was sick a great deal; and no wonder, for the mother was a devotee of fashion. She never came down to the common work of nursing her offspring. They never pillowed their heads on her white bosom, nor drew delight from the rich treasury of her teeming breasts. No—no—for she was a woman of fashion, and the leader of a set. And so, this delicate child was given over, almost entirely, to the care of a hired nurse—a woman who put away her own babe that she might receive wages for giving nourishment to the child of another—a woman of gross appetites and a selfish nature.

The babe did not grow strong and beautiful, as

a well cared for baby should grow. We see, in imagination, its thin, white face at the window opposite, and the old pity comes stealing into our heart. Last week a strange rumor ran through the neighbourhood. The baby was seriously ill, and it was said that the nurse had given it an overdose of laudanum. It was also said, that, on being closely pressed, she had owned to the fact of a frequent nightly administration of anodynes. No wonder the baby was puny and sickly.

The pale, thin face was never seen again at the window, nor the little hands playing feebly with the tassels. And now, the bunch of black crape, tied with a narrow strip of white ribbon, tells the story of its departure. Day after to-morrow, or, at latest, day after that, the earth will be heaped above a little coffin, in which the mortal remains of an infant martyr will sleep in that rest from which there is no awaking, while the immortal spirit will have arisen and passed upward to the habitation of angels.

Will the mother, as she looks her last look on

the waxen face of her dead babe, realize, in anything like an adequate degree, the sad truth that it died the death of a martyr—first having borne the slow torture of sickness brought on by her cruel neglect? We fear not; she is a selfish woman of the world; her heart is iced over. Alas! that to such should be committed these precious little ones.

It was once our fortune—no, our misfortune—to live for a few months in the same house with a woman who had a mania for dosing her children. Poor little wretches! What a sad time they had of it. The mother actually had a medicine chest! Not homœopathic—oh, no; there was no such good luck in store for her unfortunates—but a regular calomel and jalap box, with scales for weighing out the crude poisons, and a measuring glass for determining the size of liquid doses. She was her own family physician, and so deeply interested in the profession that she was for ever trying to extend her practice beyond the circle of her own sickly, cadaverous little ones.

Through colic, teething, whooping-cough, measles, mumps, influenza, and the whole catalogue of ordinary diseases incident to childhood, she carried most of her children safely—that is, they survived the double attacks of disease and medicine, and, by naturally good constitutions, came through the trying ordeal—though not unscathed. On these occasions she would point to their skinny forms and wan faces as trophies of her skill, never for a moment dreaming that they were the miserable wrecks of her blind folly.

As intimated, all did not come safely through. There was one little girl with feebler vitality than the rest—a pale, pitiful, wee thing, who always looked at you as if she were asking sympathy. Her lips did not swell out roundly, into a sweet expression that tempted you to kiss them, but were drawn in and held closely together, as if guarding the sensitive palate from some disgusting assault. If you gave her anything to eat—a cake or a sugar plum—she would look at it narrowly before venturing it near her lips, and her first

mouthful was ever taken with due caution. If her infantile memory could have been explored, we doubt if the first impression of delight that recorded itself as she drew the sweet draught from her mother's bosom, would have been found free from a sense of nausea so distinct as to send a shudder along her nerves.

Poor little one! How well she knew the taste of rhubarb and senna, of magnesia and squills. Sweetmeats were an offence to her, for, had she not been made, scores of times, to swallow nauseous drugs, or choking pills, concealed in their delusive attractions. In the hollow of her little arm were three scars, where the cruel lancet had drawn away the life-blood, which had never found its way back to her cheeks. The skin of her tender bosom had more than once been scalded off by blisters, while her temples bore the marks of cupping. The marvel was, that she had survived so long all these assaults upon her life.

"Don't you feel well, dear?" we said to her one

day, as we came into the parlor and found her lying on the sofa.

"Not very well, thank you, sir," and she raised herself up in a weary way.

"What's the matter?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Does your head ache?"

"A little bit; but don't tell mamma, please, sir."

"Why not tell your mother, dear?"

"'Cause she'll give me nasty medicine."

We felt the full force of this reason.

"You don't like to take medicine," we said.

The child's stomach heaved from nausea created by the thought. She gave no other reply.

"Please don't tell mamma, sir. I'll lie here a little while, and then I'll be better. I don't want to take any medicine, it is so dreadful bad."

And the poor child laid herself down on the sofa, and shut her eyes in such a sad way that our heart was touched. For more than half an hour

we lingered in the parlor, every now and then questioning the child as to how she felt.

"Better," she would always answer; and then add—"Don't tell mamma. I can't take bad medicine now."

But mamma entered while we were yet in the parlor.

"I'm not sick," said the little one, getting up quickly.

Professional instinct was alive.

"What's the matter?" the mother drew to her child at once.

"Nothing at all, mamma. I'm not sick."

"You're not? Let me feel your hand."

The poor child thrust her hand behind her.

"Give me your hand!" The mother spoke almost severely.

"My hand isn't hot, mamma."

"Yes, it is hot. I declare! the child has fever. Does your head ache?"

"No, ma'am."

And yet, only a little while before, she told us

that her head ached. Fear led her to equivocation and direct falsehood, poor child!

"Come up stairs," said the mother, taking her arm and leading her from the room. I caught a glance of her anxious, almost fearful face, as she went out, and it haunted me for days.

A little while afterward her imploring cries of "No—no, mamma! I can't take it! Don't! don't! oh, don't!" rang through the house. Then there was a struggle, and sounds of choking and strangling, followed by a low, moaning cry that smote sadly on the ear, and continued until silenced by angry threats.

"How is Alice?" was inquired early in the evening, for it had gone forth that the child was sick.

"She isn't at all well," the mother answered, "but I've given her medicine, and hope to see her better in the morning."

That hope was not realized. The morning found Alice too sick to rise. The dose of rhubarb which had been forced upon her reluctant stomach,

had not only irritated the mucous membrane of the whole alimentary canal, but, by means of the absorbents, had been thrown into the blood, and conveyed to all parts of the feeble system—destroying the trembling balance of health. If she had been perfectly well, an assault like this would have been attended by disturbing consequences, but, under a morbid condition, it had a most disastrous effect.

“Hadn’t you better send for the doctor?” suggested one and another.

“I’ve given her more medicine this morning. She’ll be better after that acts freely.”

More medicine! poor child:

But she was not better, and the doctor was sent for. He did not approve of giving much medicine. Experience, philosophy, and observation had taught him, that nature was the great restorer. So he prescribed bathing in warm water, and a quieting draught.

“But, doctor, she is a sick child,” urged the mother.

"I know she is," was answered.

"Won't time be lost?"

"For what reason?" asked the doctor.

"You are really giving no medicine."

"I fear she has already had too much. Give nature a little chance. I want to gain time."

And the doctor went away. But the mother was not satisfied. She had no faith in the let-alone system. So she tried her hand again; and this time more energetically. She was successful—in throwing her child into convulsions; and then there was an exciting time in the house.

When the doctor called in on the next morning, he pronounced the case hopeless. There was congestion of the brain. Before night, little Alice was dead, and numbered with the martyrs of our homes.

How proud you were of that dear little fellow, whose mind opened in advance of his years. At twelve months, he could repeat a dozen different nursery ditties. When two years old, he knew all the letters in the alphabet by sight, and could

put them together into words. At three, he could spell remarkably, and at four years of age read almost anything.

You encouraged the precocity, by showing him off to your friends. We don't wonder you were proud of him, for he was a bright, beautiful, intelligent child; and so companionable, with his thoughts beyond his years. He cared more for books than plays; and so his toys were books. We never saw him riding about on a stick for a horse, rolling a hoop, or trundling a velocipede. He had aspirations altogether above these, at the ripe age of seven.

What a fine intellectual face he had! Ample brow; dark glittering eyes, full of thought and feeling; a mouth as composed and expressive of purpose as a man's. There was no vain intrusiveness about him; no seeming consciousness of his intellectual superiority over other children of his age. If you talked to him, he would answer as he thought—but how mature were his thoughts! Books were his delight, and he grew daily more

and more fascinated with them. Milton and Shakspeare at seven! What were you thinking of, to feed his imagination with these!

How tall and slender he grew! And you admired the delicate grace of his proportions, comparing him with the coarse, rough, animal-looking boys of your neighbors, who, in your idea, only lived to eat and play.

Instead of repressing him at school, and holding his mind back among the easier rudimentals, his teachers, proud of their pupil, as you were of your son, advanced him rapidly to higher studies, ranking him with boys his senior by many years. He came home daily with his satchel so loaded with books, that the weight of them tired him; and you let him go from the dinner-table, with his food lying yet unappropriated in his stomach, to the study of his hard lessons; thus allowing his brain to draw off the nervous vitality required for the work of digestion and assimilation—sacrificing the bodily powers to the intellectual. Were his tasks finished by supper time? O, no! not half

finished. There was still the Latin lesson; the page of Definitions; the lessons in Geography, Botany, Physiology, and Moral Philosophy! And so, after the evening meal, instead of a playful romp with little brother and sister, came two hours of hard study.

Have we exaggerated? No! The strange truth has not been fully told. We say strange, but truth is always stranger than fiction. To read of such insane violence to health—of such downright cruelty to children—awakens a kind of indignation. And yet, are not hundreds of thousands of school children in our land subjected to the discipline we have described? As if five or six hours of confinement and mental application were not a tax up to the full capacity of mind and body of a child, two or three hours more are required in close study out of school, thus robbing the p'ysical system for the sake of the intellectual, and, of consequence, weakening both. It is a marvel that such things are! But, we are digressing.

At eight years of age, your beautiful, precocious boy showed signs of physical decay. First came wakefulness at night, and nervous terrors in the first stages of sleep. His appetite left him, and you had to urge, coax, and sometimes scold a little, in order to make him give to his stomach even the light burden of food it did not wish to take. His pale intellectual countenance attracted the eyes of every one. Mothers turned in the street to look at him, remarking, "What a strangely beautiful boy!" And there was an impression, if the thought were not spoken, that he was not long for this world.

But you did not take the alarm yet. His studies were not remitted. He still brought home the weary load of books, and still mastered tasks that were gigantic ones for a child of his years.

At nine he was so much of an invalid, that the doctor positively required him to be taken from school. How you grieved over this; not so much for the defect of health—you did not understand

how serious the defect was—as for the great loss it would be in an educational point of view.

Poor child! Leaving school went hard with him; for he was enamored of his studies. For a little while, the relaxation and freedom from confinement and intense mental application produced a favorable change; but this, alas! was only temporary. Nearly all exercise was constrained; and, unless watched and remonstrated with, he would spend nearly the whole of each day in reading. There came, at this time, an unhappy change in his disposition. He grew captious, irritable, and self-willed. The nervous wakefulness and terror by night returned upon him, harassing and debilitating him to a degree that occasioned fear lest fatal consequences might ensue.

“You must send him into the country, and keep him away from books,” said the physician. And you sent him to the country. For a little while this change seemed to promise well. But the country air acted only as a temporary stimulus. In less than a month, you brought him home to

die; and he rests now with the great company of little martyrs.

Go with us just a square from your luxurious home, fair lady, and we will show you a phase of baby-life that will, we think, haunt your memory for days and nights, and set you to questioning about your duties and responsibilities as a Christian woman. Nay, do not hold back. Nerves are delicate things, we know, and sensibilities must not be too severely shocked. But shrinking nerves and pained sensibilities are light things, in comparison with wrongs and sufferings that might be lessened, if you would resolutely contemplate them. So, come with us. We will not detain you long.

You enter with us a miserable hovel. Ah, the first sound that falls upon our ears is the wailing cry of a little child! There it is, lying upon a bundle of dirty rags in the corner. It cannot be six months old! You shudder, and shrink back. But it is too late now to recede. If there is any pity in your heart, you must stay. Where is the mother? We call. Hark! There is a sound

from the next room. A pause. All is silent again. We push open the door, and what a sight is revealed to us! A woman in tatters and filth, lying drunk upon the floor! Oh, horrible! You cover your face with your hands and shudder.

But the babe cries on in such a pitiful wail, that your heart is touched, and you go back and stand by the bundle of rags in the corner, bending over, but afraid to touch the repulsive-looking object. Yet it is a babe, precious in the sight of God, and beloved of his angels! And their love is beginning to flow into your heart, which is now moved by pity, and your hand has reached down to the famishing little one.

“Are there no neighbors?” you ask, looking around upon us with knit brows, and speaking like one in earnest.

Yes, there are neighbors. A woman next door saw us enter, and curiosity, if no better feeling, has drawn her in after us.

“I am a neighbor.”

Your question is answered.

“Then take this child, in heaven’s name! and do for it what is needed.”

Yes, that is talking to the purpose. Pity you had not come before.

You cannot turn your eyes away. The woman has taken the baby on her lap—it still cries pit-eously—and you see that its face and head are a mass of sores. The wet rags only half cover its little, emaciated body, and you see that the flesh is red and excoriated. Poor little sufferer! Did you dream of anything like this within almost a stone’s throw of the dwelling in which your little ones are so tenderly cared for! No—no! You tell the woman to take the babe into her own house, and that you will go home and send it changes of clothing. All this is done. You send, a few hours later, to ask about the little one, and word comes that it is ill. A physician is called; but he can only alleviate suffering. Death has already received his commission, and from the lap of pain another martyr will soon be translated.

Shall we go on in this darker, sadder way, tak-

ing you to the lower haunts of dissipation, vice, and crime, where children are born, and die from cruelty, want, and neglect, by hundreds and thousands every year? No; we have not the heart to go there, even if you would accompany us. We said, in the beginning, that ours was not the pen from which the new Book of Martyrs was to come, and that we should leave for one of sterner stuff the task of lingering over details that, whenever given, must cause strong hearts to shudder, and warm cheeks to pale. What we have written is for suggestion—a mere glimpse at the appalling truth which lies hidden beneath the fair surface of things—that you may pause by the way, and ponder the subject of infant martyrdom.



VIII.

THE LITTLE MAID OF ALL WORK.

SUPPER was not ready when Abraham Munday, at the close of a long, weary summer day, lifted the latch of his humble dwelling. He was not greatly disappointed, for it often so happened. The table was on the floor, partly set, and the kettle over the fire.

“There it is again!” exclaimed Mrs. Munday, fretfully. “Home from work, and no supper ready! The baby has been so cross!—hardly out of my arms the whole afternoon. I’m glad you’ve come, though. Here, take him, while I fly around and get things on the table.”

Mr. Munday held out his arms for the little one, who sprang into them with a baby shout.

Mrs. Munday did fly around in good earnest. A few pieces of light wood thrown on the fire,

soon made the kettle sing, and steam, and bubble. In a wonderfully short space of time all was ready, and the little family, consisting of husband, wife, and three children, were gathered around the table. To mother's arms baby was transferred, and she had the no very easy task of pouring out her husband's tea, preparing cups of milk and water for the two older of the little ones, and restraining the baby, who was grappling first after the sugar bowl, then after the milk pitcher, and next after the tea-pot.

"There!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Munday. And two quick slaps on baby's hand were heard. Baby, of course, answered promptly with a wild scream. But what had baby done? Look into the tea tray—the whole surface is covered with milk. His busy, fluttering hands have overturned the pitcher.

Poor Mrs. Munday lost her temper completely.

"It's of no use to attempt eating with this child," said she, pushing her chair back from the table. "I never have any good of my meals!"

Mr. Munday's appetite failed him at once. He continued to eat, however, but more hurriedly. Soon he pushed back his chair, also, and rising up, said, cheerfully—

“There, I'm done, Lotty. Give me the baby, while you eat your supper.”

And he took the sobbing child from the arms of its mother. Tossing it up and speaking to it in a lively, affectionate tone of voice, he soon restored pleasure to the heart, and smiles to the countenance of the little one.

Mrs. Munday felt rebuked for her impatience. She often suffered from these silent rebukes. And yet, the trials of temper she daily endured were very great. No relish for food was left. The wants of the two children were attended to, and then, while Mr. Munday still held the baby, she busied herself in clearing off the table, washing up the tea things, and putting the room in order.

An hour later. Baby was asleep, and the other children with him, in the land of dreams. Mrs. Munday was busy sewing on a little frock, and

Mr. Munday sat with his face turned from the light, in a brown study.

“Lotty,” said the latter, waking up from his reverie, and speaking with considerable emphasis —“It’s no use for you to keep going on in this way any longer. You are wearing yourself out. And what’s more, there’s no comfort at home for anybody. You must get a woman to help about the house.”

“We can’t afford it, Abraham,” was Mrs. Munday’s calm, but decided answer.

“We must afford it, Lotty. You are killing yourself.”

“A woman will cost a dollar and a half a week, and her board at least as much more. We can’t spare that sum—and you only getting ten dollars a week.”

The argument was unanswerable. Mr. Munday sighed and was silent. Again his face was turned from the light; and again the hand of his wife plied quickly the glittering needle.

“I’ll tell you what we might do,” said

Mrs. Munday, after the lapse of nearly ten minutes.

"Well?"—her husband turned towards her, and assumed a listening attitude.

"We might take a small girl to help in the family. It would only cost us her victuals and clothes."

Mr. Munday mused for some time before answering. He didn't just like the proposition.

"Anything," he at length said, "to lighten your labor. But, can you get one?"

"I think so. You remember poor Mrs. Barrow, who died last month? She left a little girl, about eleven years old, with no one to see after her but an old aunt, who, I've heard, isn't very kind to the child. No doubt she would be glad to get her into a good place. It would be very easy for her. She could hold the baby, or rock it in the cradle while I was at work about the house—and do a great many little things for me that would lighten my task wonderfully. It's the very thing, husband"—ad'ed Mrs. Munday, with ani-

mation, "and if you agree, I will run over and see Mrs. Gooch, her aunt, in the morning before you go to work."

"How old did you say she was?" inquired Mr. Munday.

"She was eleven in the spring, I believe."

"Our Aggy is between nine and ten."

Something like a sigh followed the words, for the thought of having his little Aggy turned out, motherless, among strangers, to do drudgery and task-work, forced itself upon his mind.

"True. But a year or so makes a great difference. Besides, Anna Barrow is an uncommonly smart girl for her age."

Mr. Munday sighed again.

"Well," he said, after being silent for a few moments, "you can do as you think best. But it does seem hard to make a servant of a mere child like that."

"You call the position in which she will be by too harsh a name," said Mrs. Munday. "I can make her very useful without overtaking her."

And then, you know, as she has got to earn her own living, she cannot acquire habits of industry too soon."

Mrs. Munday was now quite in earnest about the matter; so much so that her husband made no further objection. On the next morning, she called round to see Mrs. Gooch, the aunt of Anna Barrow. The offer to take the little girl was accepted at once.

When Mr. Munday came home at dinner-time, he found the meal all ready and awaiting his appearance. Mrs. Munday looked cheerful and animated. In a corner of the room sat a slender little girl, not very much larger than Aggy, with the sleeping baby in her arms. She lifted her eyes timidly to the face of Mr. Munday, who gave her a kind look.

"Poor, motherless child!" Such was his thought.

"I can't tell you how much assistance she is to me," whispered Mrs. Munday to her husband,

leaning over to him as they sat at the table. "And the baby seems so fond of her."

Mr. Munday said nothing, but before his mind was distinctly pictured his own little girl, a servant in the home of a stranger. On his return from work in the evening everything wore a like improved appearance. Supper was ready, and Mrs. Munday had nothing of the worried look so apparent on the occasion of her first introduction to the reader. Everything wore an improved appearance, did we say? No, not everything. There was a change in the little orphan girl; and Mr. Munday saw, at a glance, that the change, so pleasant to contemplate, had been made at her expense. The tidy look, noticed at dinner-time, was gone. Her clothes were soiled and tumbled; her hair had lost its even, glossy appearance, and her manner showed extreme weariness of body and mind. She was holding the baby. None saw the tears that crept over her cheeks, as the family gathered around the tea-table, and forgetful of her enjoyed their evening meal.

Supper over, Mrs. Munday took the baby and undressed it, while Anna sat down to eat her portion of food. Four times, ere this was accomplished, did Mrs. Munday send her up to her chamber for something wanted either for herself or the child.

"You must learn to eat quickly, Anna," said Mrs. Munday, ere the little girl, in consequence of these interruptions, was half through her supper. Anna looked frightened and confused, pushed back her chair, and stood gazing inquiringly at the face of her mistress.

"Are you done?" asked the latter, coldly.

"Yes, ma'am," was timidly answered.

"Very well. Now I want you to clear off the table. Gather up all the things and take them out into the kitchen. Then shake the table-cloth, set the table back, and sweep up the room."

Mr. Munday looked at his wife, but said nothing.

"Shall I help Anna, mother?" inquired Aggy.

"No," was rather sharply answered. "Have you studied your lesson?"

"No, ma'am."

"Go about that, then; it will be as much as you can do before bed-time."

Mrs. Munday undressed her baby, with considerable more deliberation of manner than usual, observing all the while the proceedings of Anna, and every now and then giving her a word of instruction. She felt very comfortable, as she finally leaned back in her chair, with her little one asleep in her arms. By this time Anna was in the kitchen, where, according to instructions, she was washing up the tea things. While thus engaged, to the best of her small ability, a cup slipped from her hand and was broken on the floor. The sound startled Mrs. Munday from her agreeable state of mind and body.

"What's that?" she cried.

"A cup, ma'am," was the trembling answer.

"You're a careless little girl!" said Mrs. Munday, rather severely. The baby was now taken

up stairs and laid in bed. After this, Mrs. Munday went to the kitchen, to see how her little maid of all work was getting on with the supper dishes. Not altogether to her satisfaction, it must be owned.

“You will have to do all these over again,” she said—not kindly and encouragingly, but with something captious and authoritative in her manner. “Throw out that water from the dish-pan, and get some more.”

Anna obeyed, and Mrs. Munday seated herself by the kitchen table, to observe her movements, and correct them when wrong.

“Not that way!”—“Here, let me show you!”—“Stop! I said it must be done in this way.” “Don’t set the dishes down so hard; you’ll break them—they’re not made of iron!”

These, and words of like tenor, were addressed to the child, who, anxious to do right, yet so confused as often to misapprehend what was said to her, managed at length to complete her task.

“Now sweep up the kitchen, and put things to rights. When you’re done, come in to me,” said

Mrs. Munday, who now retired to the little sitting-room, where her husband was glancing over the daily paper, and Aggy engaged in studying her lesson. On entering, she remarked,

“It’s more trouble to teach a girl like this, than to do it yourself.”

Mr. Munday said nothing; but he had his own thoughts.

“Mother, I’m sleepy; I want to go to bed,” said Fanny, younger by two or three years than Aggy.

“I don’t want to go yet; and besides, I haven’t got my lesson,” said the older sister.

“Wait until Anna is done in the kitchen, and she will go up and stay with you. Anna!” Mrs. Munday called to her, “make haste! I want you to put Fanny to bed.”

In a few minutes Anna appeared, and, as directed, went up stairs with Fanny.

“She looks tired. Hadn’t you better tell her to go to bed also?” suggested Mr. Munday.

“To bed!” ejaculated Mrs. Munday, in a voice

of surprise, "I've got something for her to do besides going to bed."

Mr. Munday resumed the reading of his paper, and said no more. Fanny was soon asleep.

"Can't Anna go up with me now? I'm afraid to go alone," said Aggy, as the little girl came down from the chamber.

"Yes, I suppose so. But you must go to sleep quickly. I've got something for Anna to do."

Mr. Munday sighed, and moved himself uneasily in his chair. In half an hour Anna came down—Aggy was just asleep. As she made her appearance, the baby awoke and cried out.

"Run up and hush the baby to sleep before he gets wide awake," said Mrs. Munday.

The weary child went as directed. In a little while the low murmur of her voice was heard, as she attempted to quiet the babe by singing a nursery ditty. How often had her mother's voice soothed her to sleep with the self-same words and melody! The babe stopped crying; and soon all was silent in the chamber. Nearly half an hour

passed, during which Mrs. Munday was occupied in sewing.

"I do believe that girl has fallen asleep," said she, at length, letting her work drop in her lap, and assuming a listening attitude.

"Anna!" she called. But there was no answer.

"Anna!" The only returning sound was the echo of her own voice.

Mrs. Munday started up, and ascended to her chamber. Mr. Munday was by her side, as she entered the room. Sure enough; Anna had fallen asleep, leaning over on the bed where the infant lay.

"Poor motherless child!" said Mr. Munday, in a voice of tender compassion that reached the heart of his wife, and awakened there some womanly emotions.

"Poor thing! I suppose she is tired out," said the latter. "She'd better go to bed."

So she awakened her, and told her to go up into the garret, where a bed had been made for

her on the floor. Thither the child proceeded, and there wept herself again to sleep. In her dream that night, she was with her mother, in her own pleasant home, and she was still dreaming of her mother and her home, when she was awakened by the sharp voice of Mrs. Munday, and told to get up quickly and come down, as it was broad daylight.

“You must kindle the fire and get the kettle on in a jiffy.”

Such was the order she received on passing the door of Mrs. Munday’s room.

We will not describe, particularly, the trials of this day for our poor little maid of all work. They were very severe, for Mrs. Munday was a hard mistress. She had taken Anna as help, though not with the purpose of overworking or oppressing her. But now that she had some one to lighten her burdens and “take steps for her,” the temptation to consult her own ease was very great. Less wearied than in days past, because relieved of scores of little matters about the house,

the aggregate of which had worn her down, she was lifted somewhat above an appreciative sympathy for the child, who, in thus relieving her, was herself heavily overtasked. Instead of merely holding the baby for Mrs. Munday, when it was awake and would not lie in its cradle, and doing for her the "little odd turns," at first contemplated, so as to enable her the better to get through the work of the family, the former at once began to play the lady, and to require of Anna not only the performance of a great deal of household labor, but to wait on her in many instances where the service was almost superfluous.

When Mr. Munday came home at supper time, he found his wife with a book in her hand. The table was set, the fire burning cheerfully, and the hearth swept up. The baby was asleep in its cradle, and as Mrs. Munday read, she now and then touched gently with her foot the rocker. This he observed through the window, without himself being seen. He then glanced into the kitchen. The kettle had been taken from the fire

—the teapot was on the hearth, flanked on one side by a plate of toast, and on the other by a dish containing some meat left from dinner, which had been warmed over. These would have quickened his keen appetite, but for another vision. On her knees, in the middle of the room, was Anna, slowly, and evidently in a state of exhaustion, scrubbing the floor. Her face, which happened to be turned towards him, looked worn and pale, and he saw at a glance her red eyes, and the tears upon her cheeks. While he yet gazed upon her, she paused in her work, straightened her little form with a wearied effort, and clasping both hands across her forehead, lifted her wet eyes upwards. There was no motion in her wan lips, but Mr. Munday knew that her heart, in its young sorrow, was raised to heaven. At this moment, the kitchen door was opened, and Mr. Munday saw his wife enter.

“Eye-service!” said she, severely, as she saw the position of Anna. “I don’t like this. Not

half over the floor yet! Why, what have you been doing?"

The startled child bent quickly to her weary task, and scrubbed with a new energy imparted by fear. Mr. Munday turned heart-sick, from the window, and entered their little sitting-room, as his wife came in from the kitchen. She met him with a pleasant smile, but he was grave and silent.

"Don't you feel well?" she inquired with a look of concern.

"Not very well," he answered, evasively.

"Have you felt bad all day?"

"Yes. But I am heart-sick now."

"Heart-sick! What has happened, Abraham?"

Mrs. Munday looked slightly alarmed.

"One whom I thought full of human kindness has been oppressive, and even cruel."

"Abraham! What do you mean?"

"Perhaps my eyes deceived me!" he answered

—"perhaps it was a dream. But I saw a sight just now to make the tears flow."

And as Mr. Munday spoke, he took his wife by the arm, and led her out through the back door.

"Look!" said he, "there is a poor motherless child, scarcely a year older than our Aggy!"

Anna had dropped her brush again, and her pale face and tearful eyes were once more uplifted. Was it only a delusion or fancy; or did Mrs. Munday really see the form of Mrs. Barrow, stooping over her suffering child, as if striving to clasp her in her shadowy arms?

For a few moments, the whole mind of Mrs. Munday was in a whirl of excitement. Then stepping back from the side of her husband, she glided through the open door, and was in the kitchen ere Anna had time to change her position. Frightened at being found idle again, the poor child caught eagerly at the brush which lay upon the floor. In doing so, she missed her grasp, and weak and trembling from exhaustion, fell forward,

where she lay motionless. When Mrs. Munday endeavored to raise her up, she found her insensible.

“Poor—poor child!” said Mr. Munday, tenderly, his voice quivering with emotion, as he lifted her in his arms. He bore her up to the children’s chamber, and laid her on their bed.

“Not here,” said Mrs. Munday. “Up in her own room.”

“She is one of God’s children, and as precious in His sight as ours,” almost sobbed the husband, yet with a rebuking sternness in his voice. “She shall lie here!”

Mrs. Munday was not naturally a cruel woman; but she loved her own selfishly; and the degree in which this is done, is the measure of disregard towards others. She forgot, in her desire for service, that her little servant was but a poor, motherless child, thrust out from the parent nest, with all the tender longings of a child for love, and all its weaknesses and want of expe-

rience. She failed to remember that, in the sight of God, all children are equally precious.

But the scales fell from her eyes. She was rebuked, humbled, and repentant.

"Anna must go back to her aunt," said Mr. Munday, after the child had recovered from her brief fainting fit, and calmness was once more restored to the excited household.

"She must remain," was the subdued, but firm answer. "I have dealt cruelly with her. Let me have an opportunity to repair the wrong she has suffered. I will try to think of her as my own child. If I fail in that, the consciousness of her mother's presence will save me from my first error."

And Anna did remain—continuing to be Mrs. Munday's little maid-of-all-work. But her tasks, though varied, were light. She was never again overburdened, but treated with a judicious kindness that won her affections, and made her ever willing to render service to the utmost of her ability.

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